



THE CITY OF GROTON

Mayor Marian Galbraith

295 Meridian Street, Groton, CT 06340

(860) 446-4103 (860) 445-4058 FAX

March 19, 2015

Testimony of Marian Galbraith, Mayor of the City of Groton, in support of **HB 5720, AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DOUBLE THE CAPACITY FOR SHELLFISH SAMPLE TESTING AND TO ESTABLISH A SITE FOR SHELLFISH SAMPLE TESTING EAST OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER**

On behalf of the City of Groton, I am pleased to provide testimony in favor of HB 5720. This act would require the Department of Agriculture to provide the capacity for shellfish sample testing to sustain the shellfish industry in eastern Connecticut and to promote its expansion.

Current testing capacity has negatively impacted the commercial and recreational shellfishing in eastern Connecticut. Without a testing facility in the eastern part of the state, samples need to be driven to Milford, a trip that can be especially burdensome along the I-95 corridor. In the past a staff member of the Bureau of Aquaculture who happened to live locally would transport the samples to Milford. Without that connection, local shellfish commissioners, for the most part volunteers, need to transport the samples themselves, often using their own resources. Placing this burden on the local shellfish commissioners, has meant that less testing has been done and beds remain closed for long periods of time. In the Town of Groton, both Bluff Point and Mumford's Cove have been closed for long periods of time. This has caused the purchase of licenses to decrease, affecting the revenue needed to reseed the beds. The spiraling effect has negatively impacted recreational shellfishing. The effect is the same for commercial growers who share the responsibility of transporting samples to Milford.

Having a facility in eastern Connecticut would ease the travel time needed to transport samples, increase the likelihood of necessary testing being completed, and keep more beds open. More licenses would be purchased and more revenues realized. In addition, it would encourage commercial shellfish growers to invest in the industry in eastern Connecticut, a part of the state which has lagged behind in economic growth. While the Connecticut Sea Grant Program, located at the University of Connecticut at Avery Point is developing plans to enhance the state's recreational and commercial shellfish resources, the Bureau of Aquaculture should be actively working to encourage that growth.

I urge you to support HB 5720 and support the economy of eastern Connecticut.

Marian Galbraith
Mayor, City of Groton