

Dear Environment Committee:

My name is Kimberlee Sirois Pita. I am resident of both Rocky Hill, CT and Old Saybrook, CT.

I am concerned about the language set forth in House Bill #6032:

AN ACT CLARIFYING PROVISIONS OF THE GENERAL STATUTES CONCERNING THE USE OF BARRIER SYSTEMS FOR CERTAIN PLANTINGS.

Having been a victim of the damaging affects of yellow bamboo on my property at 31 Middletown Avenue, Old Saybrook, I am extremely concerned that this bill feature clear and appropriate language to ensure Connecticut residents do not fall victim as I did.

My story began four years ago when we bought the beach area property. The backyard had a bamboo feature that was planted by the previous homeowners. The plantings were beautiful and I knew they would create an attractive buffer between my new house and the neighbors. However, I did not realize how invasive the plant could be. The stalks began shooting up around the roots of my 100 year tree, under the fence and into my neighbors yard to the edge of their home, through my yard encroaching upon our septic system, up through my rock patio and flower gardens. The bamboo began to literally overtake my yard. What was once beautiful became an unwanted forest!!

Yellow bamboo, during its peak season, grows fast and furious both above and below ground. It will destruct anything in its way. This is why it is used as a torture mechanism in other countries. It can bust through plastic, cement, wood, root systems, etc. It is horribly invasive, powerful and dangerous.

Removal of bamboo is also extremely difficult once it has been planted and rooted. I had to hire an excavation team to dig up my yard and my neighbors yard — all at my own cost. While the soil in my side yard was replaced, remnants of the yellow bamboo still exist because of the rhizomes still underground. This fall, I still found bamboo stragglers which I needed to once again remove form the root. I am pretty sure I will always be dealing with bamboo remnants on my Old Saybrook property.

I do also want to let you know that I have tried alternative methods to kill off the bamboo, including Round Up. However, Round Up only stalls the growth, it does not eliminate it completely. Honestly I would prefer not to use harmful chemicals on my beach property.

While I support the intent of the bill, I am asking that the following be included in the House Bill 6032:

1) Clear wording that bamboo shall not be maintained or allowed to exist within the 40 foot buffer zone regardless of when the bamboo was planted. Currently the language only addresses new plantings. We need to be sure it addresses plantings that are already in existence.

2) enforcement narrowed to Zoning Officers (since DEEP has no resources) with fines PAYABLE to the municipality

3) ADD that the **Court can also enforce the 40 foot buffer zone with attorney fees, costs and disbursements paid to the prevailing party.**

The law must be clear to allow for a private citizen to get enforcement of the law through court action, by bringing a civil suit for enforcement. Yellow bamboo is beautiful but dangerous. Residents are attracted to its appeal and resiliency, but do not realize the harmful affects that it can have on a yard, or an entire neighborhood.

I will not be able to attend the public hearing, but I am respectfully submitting my testimony for your consideration. I have also included a few photos of the bamboo removal project on my Old Saybrook property. Please do something about this growing problem! It really is in the best interest of the state of Connecticut.

Sincerely,
Kimberlee S. Pita