

COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT
TESTIMONY: HOUSE BILL 6047
AN ACT PROVIDING SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR STATE HATCHERIES

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB 6047

The fish produced at the state's fish hatcheries and the fisheries programs developed by DEEP provide outdoor opportunities for tens of thousands of anglers annually resulting in over 2 million fishing trips for trout per year. This generates approximately \$50 million in expenditures for licenses, fishing equipment, food, transportation, lodging, etc. at Connecticut businesses. Approximately 15,000 school children participate in the Salmon-in-Schools and Trout in the Classroom programs which, because they utilize many volunteers, are a cost effective means of raising environmental awareness in young people.

It makes no sense to eliminate fishery programs that have such significant economic, educational and environmental benefits to Connecticut. In order to sustain these programs a long term solution is needed before any other budget cuts are made.

I am a semi-professional fly fishing guide working on the Naugatuck River. I have seen the Atlantic salmon fishery grow in popularity by leaps and bounds, especially in the past few years. There are more anglers fishing for salmon in Connecticut than ever. About half of my clients come from out of state to fish (mainly NYC and surrounding area). Aside from their fishing license fee and my guide fee, they spend money locally on flies, fishing equipment, food and gasoline. It would be a shame to see the Kensington hatchery close down. The broodstock Atlantic salmon fishery is the only Atlantic salmon fishery left in New England.

I urge the members of the Environment Committee to support this bill and request that you strongly advocate for its passage in the house and senate.

Sincerely,

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