



**Testimony of Save the Sound,
a bi-state program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment,
before the Environment Committee on February 13, 2015
in support of:**

**H.B. No. 6733
An Act Concerning Certain Commercial Fishery Licensure Reforms**

Dear Sen. Kennedy, Rep. Albis, and members of the Environment Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 6733. On behalf of CFE/Save the Sound, I would like to express our support for this bill, which would simplify our state's existing commercial fishing regulations, provide opportunities for new and young fishers, and implement sustainable management frameworks.

First, HB 6733 is a major leap forward in terms of the clarity and simplicity of our state's commercial fishing regulations. What once were long paragraphs covering many pages are now clearly defined, easily read sections. This change should be a welcome relief to fishers who may have struggled with the jumbled complexity of early versions, and should hopefully boost their faith and trust in regulatory measures they can now see clearly outlined.

Second, the addition of two new licenses provides exciting opportunities for new and young fishers to enter the industry from the first time in twenty years. The "restricted commercial fishing license" would authorize hook-and-line and small gillnets in marine waters while the "restricted commercial lobster pot license" would allow a fisher to set up to fifty lobster pots.

Finally, HB 6733 also sets the stage for the implementation of sustainable fishing practices. It is critical with any commercial endeavor to ensure that species abundance is maintained. Our support for this bill rests on its promotion of small-scale, low-impact fishing opportunities. Fishermen, whether recreational or commercial, are often deeply passionate about conserving and properly managing the water resources they enjoy or making their living on. At a time when Connecticut's commercial fishing industry is declining, the addition of artisanal fishers is not only a way to revitalize the industry in more a sustainable way but also an opportunity to bring a new generation of watermen to the conservation discussion.

We look forward to future information about the overall catch to ensure the revised license process is accomplishing goals for sustainability and economic development.

Sincerely,

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Save the Sound is a bi-state program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment, a non-profit organization with over 5,500 members working to protect and improve the land, air, and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. Learn more at www.ctenvironment.org.

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