



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

*Office of Steven K. Reviczky
Commissioner*



**Testimony Presented To the Connecticut Environment Committee by the
Connecticut Department of Agriculture on Raised House Bill 6839
2/27/15**

The Department of Agriculture strongly supports the adoption of the Governor's Raised Bill No. 6839, AN ACT CONCERNING A LONG ISLAND SOUND RESOURCE AND USE INVENTORY AND A LONG ISLAND SOUND BLUE PLAN.

The LONG ISLAND SOUND RESOURCE AND USE INVENTORY AND A LONG ISLAND SOUND BLUE PLAN concept is in accordance with Department of Agriculture's role as the lead agency on shellfish in Connecticut as provided by CGS Sec. 26-192a. The plan is closely aligned with the long-term vision of the Department to apply the best scientific information and data to molluscan shellfish resource management and the protection of public health as it relates to the harvest and consumption of molluscan shellfish.

Shellfish are among Long Island Sound's most valuable natural resources. However, many citizens of the state have a limited comprehension of the significant role molluscan shellfish play in the environment and quality of Long Island Sound. The development of a comprehensive Long Island Sound resource and use inventory will have several significant benefits, including ensuring that existing shellfish resources are identified, and commercial and recreational shellfishing activities are adequately assessed and recognized as critical aspects of the Long Island Sound.

The completed Long Island Sound Blue Plan will serve as an additional tool for regulatory agencies as permit applications are considered. Agencies currently consider existing energy, environmental and aquaculture statutes, and the inclusion of a Long Island Sound Blue Plan will allow more informed, science-based decision making in order to better protect one of Connecticut's most valuable natural resources and the activities that rely on it.

The Long Island Sound Blue Plan will be a comprehensive resource for citizens and stakeholders, as well as provide documentation of Connecticut's shellfish resources and opportunities. The plan allows for fact based decision making affecting Connecticut's shellfish industry and stakeholder groups, including municipal shellfish commissions, conservation groups and regulatory agencies.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important legislation.

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