

Good afternoon,

My name is Sylvain De Guise, I am a faculty member at the University of Connecticut where I also serve as director for the Connecticut Sea Grant College Program. Sea Grant is a federal-state-university partnership that supports research, outreach and education programs related to coastal and marine issues through a network of programs in all US coastal and Great Lakes states. I am here to testify in support of H.B. No. 6035 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING A LONG ISLAND SOUND RESOURCE AND USE INVENTORY AND A LONG ISLAND SOUND BLUE PLAN and H.B. No. 6839 AN ACT CONCERNING A LONG ISLAND SOUND BLUE PLAN AND RESOURCE AND USE INVENTORY.

It is my opinion that the state of Connecticut would greatly benefit from a Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning exercise in order to protect the natural resources of Long Island Sound while at the same time supporting existing and future recreational and commercial uses. It is important to note that Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning is not zoning. It is rather a participatory process by which stakeholders and managers assess and inventory the distribution of natural resources and human uses as a starting point to plan for the future, with the explicit goal of reducing conflicts. This approach, referred to as a Blue Plan in H.B. no 6035/H.B. no 6839, is not new. It has been recently implemented in two neighboring states, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, in addition to being used in numerous other localities including Europe and Australia in the last decade or so. It is supported by the US National Ocean Policy, with emphasis at the regional scale, for which the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic are at the forefront.

UConn and Sea Grant are well positioned to contribute to the process through scientific knowledge and relationships with stakeholder groups. In fact, UConn has made investments in its facilities, seagoing capability, and faculty expertise, and is already engaged in diverse activities that will be important to the development of a Blue Plan. For example, UConn leads one of three consortia involved in a Long Island Sound mapping initiative. Funded through a \$7M Cross-Sound Cable Fund, the effort aims to map the physical and chemical characteristics of the seafloor as well as the ecosystems they support, to facilitate future management decisions. UConn has also been the recipient of competitively awarded funds to help provide a basis for the characterization of natural resources along the New England coast. Further, UConn has co-led informal bi-state discussions over the past two and a half years to inform how a Sound planning effort could be developed.

Given the participatory nature of ocean planning and the potential role for UConn, for which I have been appointed point person for matters related to the Blue Plan, I strongly support H.B. 6035 and H.B. 6839.

Yours,



Sylvain De Guise, Director