



February 2, 2015

Senator Ted Kennedy, Jr., Representative James Albis, and members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Avery-Copp House on the banks of the Thames River in Groton I am pleased to submit testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 345, "An act concerning the water taxi at the Heritage Park in the Towns of Groton and New London." I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of this legislation to provide the Groton and New London region with water taxi service.

The Avery-Copp House is a small historic museum in its infancy as a community driver of our local historic waterfront. Our challenge has been to make our museum a relevant player in the region of so many excellent historic attractions. Groton is the home of the oldest Revolutionary War battle site in the State, which is "Still Revolutionary", and more people need to know about this.

The Heritage Park water taxi project would not only assist our small museum and historic sites increase visitation but also provide businesses on both sides of the river increased foot traffic creating another economic reason for the support of this project.

By connecting the two sides of the river via the water we can give local children a real life opportunity to more easily visit historic sites right in their own back yard and give them a memorable opportunity to be on the water, which they are surrounded by every day.

With the new Coast Guard Museum coming to downtown New London, the time is right to capitalize on these local assets and ensure active participation and collaboration on both sides of the Thames River. This project has been an amazingly cooperative project among so many stakeholders in the region. It is an opportunity to grow our regional area, increase tourism, offer educational opportunities and highlight the history of our region that is so very important to the State of Connecticut as a whole. We believe the water taxi will be the catalyst that this region needs to achieve a higher economic status benefitting everyone.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Wells, Director

Heritage Park Steering Committee

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