



State of Connecticut

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Transportation Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
Wednesday, February 11, 2015

Testimony in support of SB 512 AN ACT CONCERNING A GUARDRAIL ON ROUTE 154 IN OLD SAYBROOK and HB 5932 AN ACT REQUIRING A GUARDRAIL ALONG ROUTE 154.

Thank you to Representative Guerrero, Senator Maynard, Senator Boucher, Representative O'Dea, and esteemed members of the Transportation Committee for bringing up these two proposals for public hearing. Both SB 512 and HB 5932 speak to the same exact proposal, so please consider each part of this testimony for both bills.

The concept behind these two bills is important to both the residents and tourists of Old Saybrook, CT. The Old Saybrook causeway is a beautiful stretch of State Road 154 that carries motorists, cyclists, runners, and walkers almost a mile across South Cove. It takes people from Saybrook Point to the entrance of the Borough of Fenwick. If you haven't walked this stretch at sunset in the summer then you are truly missing out on one of our state's most breathtaking experiences.

In addition to folks utilizing it for travel and its scenic views, there is fishing and crabbing permitted, by law, on the Connecticut River side of the causeway. It is currently against state law to fish on the South Cove side of the Causeway, but there have been instances of this occurring.

The main issue is not the act of fishing, but rather what the fishermen leave behind – pollution. There is animal waste and, worse, items such as plastic bottles, plastic bags, and other pollutants being left on the causeway or in the area many of the fishermen park. This area is off State Road 154 to the south by the entrance to the Borough of Fenwick and its golf course, which is a desirable recreational spot for many in the warmer months. Some of the folks who use this 'parking area' pollute the wetlands that are directly adjacent to it. In addition to the garbage, pollutants such as leaking oil seep into our precious environment.

Steps have been taken to try to minimize the pollution from occurring. These include a trash barrel near the 'parking area' and fishing line receptacles on the causeway. Many of the fishermen are ignoring these solutions and the problem persists. In addition to the waste, there is a safety issue by parking so close to what is, at times, a very busy road (especially in the summer). Numerous complaints from townspeople and tourists alike have led to this proposal to protect our environment from pollution and ensure the safety of those traveling.

A lot of people would like to see a complete fishing/crabbing ban, but this is not practical due to lack of resources. Instead, a guardrail along the area where folks are currently parking would effectively reduce the pollution at this area and reduce traffic. It would allow more people to enjoy this stretch of beautiful land without having to worry about pollution and instead focus on the natural landscape in front of them.

Just an idea as to how much waste is along the causeway to this 'parking area', the Kiwanis Club held several 'clean-up days' to cleanup this area and came out of it with dozens of filled garbage bags containing plastic bottles, plastic bags, fast food bags, cigarette butts, beer cans, and many other sources of pollution. I, and many of the residents and visitors of Old Saybrook, commend them for their efforts. Out of all they were able to pick up, one has to think about how much they couldn't get to because it was in the water or buried beneath the soil. This guard rail can prevent pollution and raise enjoyment, so hopefully I can count on your support for building a guard rail along this beautiful stretch of State Road 154 in Old Saybrook.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Devin Carney
State Representative
23rd District