



CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY

Member Municipalities: *Brookfield • Danbury • New Fairfield • New Milford • Sherman*

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February 23, 2016

Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Laurence J. Marsicano, CLA Executive Director

Raised House Bill No. 5145 – AAC BOATING SAFETY ON CANDLEWOOD LAKE

Dear Co-Chairs Sen. Kennedy and Rep. Albis, Vice Chairs Sen. Moore and Rep. Arconti, Ranking Members Sen. Chapin and Rep. Shaban, and Members of the Environment Committee:

We apologize for not responding to this bill sooner. While the Board of the Candlewood Lake Authority has not had the time to formally take a position on this bill, they did believe it important that I provide some perspective for your consideration.

It is quite likely that Candlewood Lake experiences higher boating use at night relative to other lakes in Connecticut. This is due, in part, to the significant access by shoreline residents and those with boats at commercial, public or private marinas who may want to boat at night for a variety of reasons (e.g. visiting other lakefront residents, overnighting on the water, visiting Down the Hatch Restaurant, fishing, etc.). To our knowledge, these incidents of night time boating use have never been quantified.

In recent years, night time organized prize fishing tournaments have been scheduled on the lake. During the summer of 2015 no less than twelve night time tournaments were scheduled for eight summer weekends. Total anglers and boats scheduled were 325 and 203, respectively. These tournaments were scheduled to start at 7 or 8 pm and end sometime between 4 and 8am depending on the tournament.

Each year for literally decades the Danbury Volunteer Fire Department holds an evening fireworks display on a weekend night in celebration of Independence Day. Literally hundreds of boats are on the water that night to view the display which goes on after dark (approximately 9:30pm) and end sometime after 10pm. Both the State and the CLA provide additional patrol man-hours on the lake for the event.

Candlewood Lake is a highly utilized recreational boating resource used by a wide variety of recreational users during a wide variety of times and is also the “backyard” for over 1,500 lakefront homes and another three to four thousand homes in surrounding lake homeowner’s associations, tax districts, etc. of which there about sixty. All of these factors have contributed in numerous recreational user conflicts, e.g. water-skiers vs fishermen; paddlers and sailors vs power boaters; etc. Perhaps the conflict most reported to the CLA is that between lakefront and lake community homeowners and the organized fishing tournament community. For a complete report on recreational boating pressures and user conflict on the lake see:

<http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/common/opennat.asp?fileID=12077765>

Candlewood Lake is also under the jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission through their licensee, FirstLight Power Resources. The recent submittals to FERC by FirstLight, e.g. Form-80 / 6 Year Recreational Summary Report or Report on the recent Lake Advisory Committee Meeting minutes did not discuss nighttime use. In fact, FirstLight depicts Candlewood’s recreational boating pressures as far below carrying capacity which most on the CLA, our Lake Patrol and I would not subscribe to. FirstLight’s recent submittal to FERC with response to some of our concerns (Appendix B) can be found at:

<http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/common/OpenNat.asp?fileID=14130308>

We believe there will be support for this bill among many, but not all, of the residents living around Candlewood Lake and less support from the portion of our community who visit. In the interest of understanding community sentiment on this issue we recently posted the bill’s concept on social media with a link to an electronic questionnaire. Responses to the post included:

What is the current speed limit for the same time span?

Safety? What about sundown to 11pm? I think they need to rethink the proposed hours. The current rule makes more sense. There are more boats on the water in the evening before 11pm than there are after. The proposed hours seem more like a noise concern.

Do you know when this bill will be voted on?

Definitely should be lower at sunset too.

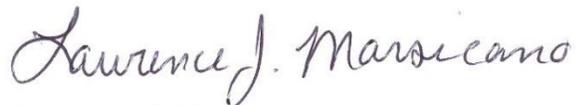
Our post appears to have reached over 1,770 people and has been shared 15 times. So far our electronic questionnaire which has been responded to 98 times with almost equal numbers of supporters (43) as there are opposed (55).

We appreciate the Committee's raising Bill No. 5145 – AAC BOATING SAFETY ON CANDLEWOOD LAKE because of the attention on all recreational boating safety issues it raises. Any help that the State can offer in addressing this and other user conflict issues on Candlewood Lake would also be greatly appreciated. We do intend to continue to gather information via our social media and through meetings with the many stakeholder groups we encounter and commit to reporting to the Environment Committee on our findings in the future.

In closing, please accept our thanks for all the work you do in the interests of Connecticut's natural resources.

Sincerely,

CANDLEWOOD LAKE AUTHORITY

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurence J. Marsicano".

Laurence J. Marsicano
Executive Director