



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

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**Testimony of the Judicial Branch
Environment Committee Public Hearing
March 4, 2016**

H.B. 5384, An Act Concerning Funding for the Turn in Poachers and Lobster Restoration Programs of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding **H.B. 5384, *An Act Concerning Funding for the Turn in Poachers and Lobster Restoration Programs of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection***. The Judicial Branch has a number of concerns regarding the bill as proposed.

The bill conflicts with Section 54-56h, which allows a judge and a prosecutor to consider that a defendant has made a contribution to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund, or performed community service work for a private nonprofit charity or other nonprofit organization, when determining the disposition of a criminal or motor vehicle case.

Should this bill pass, it would result in several administrative issues for the courts. Under Section 54-56h, a defendant can pay a charitable contribution to the clerk of the court or the Office of Victim Services directly. Under this new bill, for certain crimes a defendant would need to have his or her case continued so that he or she could make the contribution to the appropriate Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) fund. The defendant would then need to return to court and provide verification to the prosecutor of the contribution, as there is no mechanism to deposit the funds into a DEEP fund directly from a courthouse. In this time of scarce resources, this would be a difficult proposal to implement.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.