

Environment Committee
Public Testimony
March 11, 2016

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of HOUSE BILL 5583

Good Morning Co-Chairs Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis; Vice Chairs Senator Moore, Representative Arconti; Ranking Members Senator Chapin, Representative Shaban; and esteemed members of the Committee. Our names are Peter and Kelly Reiter and we are writing in SUPPORT of House Bill 5583 ***AN ACT CONCERNING AN AGREEMENT REGARDING ANNUAL WATER LEVEL DRAW DOWNS AT BASHAN LAKE IN THE TOWN OF EAST HADDAM.***

The main purpose of the bill is for the BLA and the Town of East Haddam to have the flexibility to say when and how much the water will be drawn down at Bashan Lake. **The draw downs are critical to prevent damage to walls that prevent erosion into the lake and for weed control which is necessary to ensure access to recreation areas, for the safety of all swimmers, to prevent hazardous boating, and to protect property values.**

I also wanted to bring up my other issue of how the DEEP did wrong by our lovely Bashan Lake.

My husband and I have owned a seasonal cottage at 3 Abbe Lane since 2008. Our lakehouse is located on the cove where the dam was repaired. Our house has 3 sides facing the water. Summer 2015 our house sat on what looked like a cliff with dirt and rocks surrounding it. We of course never used the house this past summer since we didn't have water to enjoy. Our fear is that this summer the lake will still not be deep enough for us to be able to open up our house and use. This was one of the most beautiful lakes in the state of CT, pure, clean and **weed free**. This past fall it was in terrible shape and the shores were choked with weeds that the DEEP and the lake owners had to need to deal with in a time consuming and costly manner. The saddest truth of this story is it could have been avoided. If only the dam repair had been completed fall of 2014 like originally proposed before the snow melt and spring rains in spring 2015 then the lake wouldn't have this issue now in spring 2016. When we as owners were told of this dam repair it was explained to us to close up our houses by labor day 2014 (which then already shortened our season since most of the seasonal homes get closed up in late Sept/early October) so that they could start emptying the lake right away and get the dam repaired before the winter snows arrived. The plan explained to us was that it would be completed BEFORE winter so that the lake could start filling back up right away with the help of snow melt and spring rains. And with how much snow we got in winter 2015 it would have been almost filled

completely. I'm not sure why it was so behind schedule when it was finally started in the spring. I don't want to know how much money we have lost in the value of our home with the way the lake is now. Even after we treated the weeds I'm not sure this lake will ever be in the pristine shape it was before this dam repair. We have 3 daughters that are growing up fast and they now will most likely lose at least 1 more summer of lake enjoyment on top of this past summer. Please recognize your department's fault in this situation and do right by the owners of the homes on this lake which was a CT treasure, now a weed filled bog and remedy this situation in a timely fashion.

Please vote on allowing the BLA to decide when the lake needs drawdowns on Bashan Lake.

Sincerely,

Kelly and Peter Reiter

3 Abbe Lane

East Haddam, CT

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Stamford, CT

Thank both Sen.Kennedy and Rep. Albis for visiting the lake this past summer and ask for their support in voting the bill out of committee.