

Good Day,

My name is Martha Santoemma and I am writing to let you know that I firmly support of House Bill 5583, An Act concerning the agreement regarding the annual water level drawdowns of Bashan Lake in the Town of East Haddam Connecticut.

This bill is important to more than just the residents of Bashan Lake and hope that improvements can be made in the management of Bashan Lake in East Haddam. I have owned lake front property for over 10 years, and like other owners, visitors and residents of Connecticut, want to keep this crystal clear body of water abundant with wildlife and all fisheries of the lake. We can do this by the state allowing us to actively participate in ensuring that it stays that way.

Even though recent activity concerning the Dam restoration was needed and greatly improved the safety of the lake for years to come, the project was delayed over the previous winter and the effects on the lake were devastating. The lakes drawdown resulted in water levels never returning which made it very difficult to prevent invasive weeds from taking over all of the shoreline and the fish we have lost. Why is it that when lake owners tried to be pro-active, the state stepped in and prevented this from happening? The Bashan Lake Association had a fund drive that was supported by the town to raise the needed funds to help in the removal of these weeds.

Over the years, we have managed to have the state agree to let the lake down three to five feet in the fall to protect waterfront walls and docks from being destroyed by the crushing effects of ice while also trying to resolve invasive weed problems at the same time. This drawdown also allows the stewards of the lake to clean up of areas along the shoreline. For several years now it has always been the concerning to the community that the people in charge of the drawdown are not monitoring the process to ensure the proper levels. We now see that is apparent even more so, due to the previous stoppage of the state helping us control the invasive weed problem that was created because the state did not do their part.

I would ask you now that the control and monitoring of the water level be the responsibility of the Town of East Haddam and the Bashan Lake Association. We are very responsible human beings with a big cause to bring back recreation, habitat for wildlife and a lot of whole family fun to one of the cleanest, clearest lakes in Connecticut.

In closing, I would like to thank both Senator Kennedy and Representative Albis for visiting the lake this past summer and ask for their support in voting this Bill out of Committee.

Sincerely,

Martha Santoemma
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