

12 Fieldstones Rd
East Haddam, CT 06423

February 24, 2016

Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Committee Members:

I'm writing in support of House Bill number 5583. An Act Concerning An Agreement Regarding the Annual Water Level of Bashan Lake in the Town of East Haddam.

I'm a lifelong resident of Bashan Lake in East Haddam and as president of the Bashan Lake Association, I represent approximately 200 members of the association. My concern is that we need the lake's water to be drawn down on an annual basis and we need a flexible approach to the water draw down. The water draw down will protect the property owner's waterfront walls from being destroyed by ice damage and it will allow for continued remediation of invasive weeds to ensure the safety of our swimmers.

Having grown up on the lake, I know that the water was drawn down every year because that was the "design" of the lake years ago. The water was drawn down to power the Mills in Moodus Center. The property owners knew this and took the time and money to invest in building stone and concrete walls in order to prevent top soil erosion on their waterfronts. This has enabled Bashan Lake to remain one of the cleanest lakes in the State. Unfortunately we have evidence of the damage done to these walls by ice when the lake has not been lowered in more recent years.

In 2014 the DEEP undertook a project to repair the dam on Bashan Lake. This project necessitated the lowering of the lake by 18 feet, leaving all the coves bare. Unfortunately due to multiple delays in the contracting and building processes the project wasn't completed as expected by February 1, 2015. In fact the dam wasn't closed to start collecting water until June 1, 2015. Because we missed capturing the snow run off and because of the draught last summer, the coves were turned into wetland areas and became breeding grounds for a multitude of wetland weeds, including cat tails and invasive phragmites.

Due to lack of hurricane rains last fall and minimal snow fall this winter, the expectation is that water will still be down in our coves during the summer of 2016. So the coves are at high risk to have an ongoing issue with these wetland weeds. Experts have told us that it will takes years to resolve this problem. Cat tails will grow in 2 -3 feet of water and can form floating mats in deeper water. Phragmites is an aggressive, invasive species that has the ability to adapt to growing in deeper water. Both weeds grow tall and extend above the surface of the water. So, as the water level rises and the cat tails and phragmites start growing in deeper water there may be a need to lower the level of water in the lake by various amounts and during various times to ensure proper remediation.

Residents of Bashan Lake, members of the Bashan Lake Association (BLA), and the Town of East Haddam are passionate about our lake. The BLA has worked hand in hand with the Town of East Haddam for years and both have spent countless hours and large sums of money to ensure the proper care of this lake. We are the best stewards of the lake and best suited to determine when and by how much the lake needs to be lowered.

Thank you for raising this bill and I strongly urge that you vote to pass it.

Sincerely,

William Denya