



Testimony
Betsy Gara, Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the Environment Committee
February 19, 2016

Re: SB- 78 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISPOSITION OF DREDGED MATERIALS FROM CERTAIN HARBORS AND PORTS ON LONG ISLAND SOUND

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) represents approximately 110 small towns throughout Connecticut, including numerous towns located along the coastline of Long Island Sound.

COST respectfully urges your **opposition to SB-78**, which contradicts the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' Dredged Material Management Plan regarding the disposal of dredged materials through open water placement.

Long Island Sound is a treasured natural resource which supports activities such as fishing, tourism, boating and swimming, which contribute significantly to the local economies in this region. Connecticut's small towns recognize the need to protect and restore the Sound and have actively worked to address concerns impacting water quality.

Small towns along the coastline are also heavily dependent on the economic activity generated by the marine industry in this region. The marine industry relies on efforts to keep channels and harbors open for navigation.

The Dredged Material Management Plan, which was developed based on significant research and study as well as the input of affected stakeholders, outlines comprehensive recommendations for managing and disposing of various types of dredged materials in an environmentally responsible and cost-effective manner. This plan will ensure that waterways in this region remain navigable.

The Dredged Material Management Plan recognizes that continued open-water disposal options for dredging materials are needed to properly maintain channels and harbors to support navigation. Without continued open-space water disposal options, economic activity will decline by an estimated 15%.

The Plan also identifies alternatives for the handling of dredging materials, including wetlands restoration, which will help protect Long Island Sound. These environmentally sound alternatives reflect a thoughtful, balanced approach to the disposal of dredging materials.



COST urges lawmakers to reject SB-78 to ensure that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Plan may be implemented to help support continued economic activity in the Long Island sound region while supporting disposal alternatives to help protect this treasured natural resource.

Thank you for your consideration.

COST is a statewide advocacy organization committed to giving small towns a strong voice in the legislative process. Its members are Connecticut towns with populations of less than 30,000. COST champions the major policy needs and concerns of Connecticut's suburban and rural towns.