



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the
Commissioner

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Public Hearing - February 19, 2016 Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner James Redeker Department of Transportation

S.B. 78 - An Act Concerning the Disposition of Dredged Materials from Certain Harbors and Ports on Long Island Sound.

The Department of Transportation (CTDOT) is opposed to S.B. 78, AAC the Disposition of Dredged Materials from Certain Harbors and Ports on Long Island Sound and respectfully offers the following comments.

CTDOT is the state agency that manages infrastructure dredging projects for our ports and harbors from Greenwich to Stonington. Most of the harbors and channels in Connecticut are Federal Navigation channels overseen by the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). The ACOE is required to identify the Federal Base Plan, which means the least costly, environmentally acceptable alternative.

Both the ACOE and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have shown through benthic studies and surveys that soon after dredging, benthic organisms return to the channel. At the ocean disposal sites the same is true that the benthic colonies return. All four of the ocean placement sites in Long Island Sound (LIS) have undergone extensive studies of the benthic and marine environments, physical oceanography, sediment chemistry, and detailed bathymetric surveys as part of the 2004 LIS Dredge Material Management Plan (DMMP) Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and the upcoming CTDOT funded Eastern LIS Supplemental EIS with determination, based upon data collected, they are well suited for placement of suitable dredge sediments with no long term adverse impacts to the environment. If we were not allowed to dispose at an ocean site identified as the Federal Base Plan, and no federal partners are willing to pay for the additional alternative cost above the base plan, the project maintenance would be deferred. The result would be the elimination of any infrastructure improvements to our ports and harbors.

The bill as written would also result in deferring the maintenance dredging of Connecticut's Federal Navigation projects which in turn, would create unsafe navigational channels in our ports and harbors, loss of revenue to the ports due to the lack of ship calls, and marinas and port facilities going out of business. This would negatively impact the newly created Connecticut Port Authority from promoting or enhancing any development in our ports.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato (860.594.3013) or C.J. Strand (860.594.3015) at the Department of Transportation.