



Raised Bill 5129: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A "SAVE OUR LAKES" NUMBER PLATE TO COMBAT AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES AND CYANOBACTERIA BLOOMS

FirstLight Power Resources, the largest hydroelectric generation and energy storage company in Connecticut, would like to offer its support to House Bill 5129, *AA Establishing a "Save our Lakes" Number Plate to Combat Aquatic Invasive Species and Cyanobacteria Blooms*. FirstLight owns and operates nine hydroelectric generation facilities in the State of Connecticut, including Shepaug and Stevenson Stations, which impound water on the Housatonic River to create Lake Lillinonah and Lake Zoar respectively. FirstLight also owns and operates the Rocky River Pumped Hydro station in New Milford, the largest source of energy storage in the state, which impounds water in Candlewood Lake for generation purposes.

These lakes, which were originally created to generate electricity, are also hugely important assets to the State of Connecticut as a whole. They generate millions of dollars in property tax revenues, provide recreation and open space, drive tourism, and nurture local small business development for the surrounding towns. Unfortunately in recent years there has been a growing threat to the health of these lakes and many others throughout the country. These threats range from nuisance species, such as Eurasian Milfoil and zebra mussels, to legitimate public health concerns from toxic cyanobacteria blooms. Numerous shutdowns of public beaches over the course of the past several years have shown a light on the problem, which according to some studies is growing worse on some of the lakes.

FirstLight has worked hand-in-hand with stakeholder groups around each of our impoundments to improve the health of the lakes. Our role on the impoundments we operate, which is mandated according to our federal hydro license through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, is to manage the shoreline according to specific guidelines designed to protect the health of the lake. We often require vegetative buffers, filtration systems, and other techniques designed to prevent pollutants from entering the lake. The water quality itself is protected by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the municipalities, or lake authorities under CGS § 7-151a. The serious nature of the threats to these lakes, particularly the public health threat that is presented by increased cyanobacteria blooms, requires additional support from the State. Additional assistance, particularly in prevention and eventual treatment of such blooms, is vital to preserve the health of these assets.

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