

Friends of West Side Pond, Inc.
PO Box 491
Goshen, Connecticut 06756

Testimony in support of HB 5129

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Environment Committee in support of HB 5129. My name is Chris Sanders and I am President of a small non-profit named Friends of West Side Pond, Inc.

West Side Pond in Northwest Connecticut is one of the smallest lakes in Connecticut with a boat launch. It has been described by the lake management experts we work with as “one of the most diverse lakes” they have surveyed in the State. In addition to being a wonderful environmental “gem”, it supports fishing, boating, swimming and many other forms of recreation via its State-owned public boat launch.

Our small lake is under attack by invasive plant species and has the potential for toxic cyanobacteria blooms. If nothing is done, the experts tell us that the invasive species will crowd out native species and eventually make the lake unsuitable for some forms of wildlife and for recreation purposes. The Friends of West Side Pond are preparing to spend \$45,000 this year in an attempt to control the invasive milfoil. This money has come from private donations and some financial support from our Town that we have been fortunate to receive. Even in a small lake like ours, invasive plant species and cyanobacteria blooms are very expensive environmental problems to address.

My point is that across the State groups like ours, large and small, are doing the hard work of dealing with this important environmental problem. We cannot do this alone.

Those who use our lakes must understand the role they play in transporting invasive species from one lake to another. Those who live on our lakes or in their watersheds must understand their role in keeping the water clean and free of nutrients that make the problem worse. And, those who wish to develop the land around these important assets need to understand how this can be done with low impact.

I urge you to support HB 5129 as it will create an opportunity for awareness, dialog, education, and (hopefully) action. I can't wait to have someone see the plates on my car and ask, “What does “Save Our Lakes” mean?”.

HB 5129 is something that you can do to help small environmental groups like ours get this message out that should not cost the State; indeed, it should generate revenue through sales of the plates.

We urge your support of HB 5129.

Thank you!

Chris Sanders
Friends of West Side Pond, Inc.
Goshen, Connecticut