

Subject: Testimony in support of HB 5129

Bantam Lake Protective Association

PO Box 37

Morris, CT 06763

Testimony in support of HB 5129

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Environmental Committee in support of HB 5129. My name is Deborah Shurberg and I am the recording secretary of the non-profit organization the Bantam Lake Protective Association (BLPA). BLPA has been an active organization with the mission of preserving and protecting Bantam Lake, and has done so since 1925.

I'm am sure you've know of Bantam Lake. It is Connecticut's largest natural lake and is located in the beautiful northwest corner of our state and occupies parts of both of the towns of Litchfield and Morris. Bantam Lake approximates close to 1,000 acres and is fortunate to have more than half of its shoreline fall within the confines of the White Memorial Foundation land preserve of over 4,000 acres of pristine wooded natural areas. White Memorial Foundation is dedicated to protecting its forests and countryside so that all may enjoy the gifts of nature that abound here. It promotes conservation, education, recreation and research.

Our lake has several public access boat launches and beaches for all to enjoy. It supports sport fishing, sailing, waterskiing, boating in warm weather and ice sailing, skating and ice fishing in the winter months.

As stated by other concerned lake groups, Connecticut lakes are falling under attack by invasive plant species and toxic cyanobacteria blooms. If these threats continue to grow unchecked, these

gems will become unsuitable for use by all who enjoy them today. Additionally the economic impact to local municipalities due to the decline in tourism revenues and the property tax base will be significant. As an example, although the taxable acreage of properties bordering Bantam Lake make up only 3% of the taxable acreage in the town of Morris; those parcels contribute close to 40% of the town's tax base. A deterioration to Bantam Lake will have severe impact on this small town's tax base.

Yearly funding from the town of Morris and the White Memorial Foundation, grants received from the state of Connecticut along with the private fundraising efforts of the BLPA have aided in efforts to thwart these threats. However, this is an ongoing, long-term effort requiring a significant and sustained funding source that is not impacted by the political climate and economic variables that affect many of our current funding sources. HB5129 would represent a significant step in the necessary direction to provide a more secure and sustainable funding source for the many lakes within our beautiful state, including Bantam Lake. I urge you to support HB5129 as it will promote education and awareness towards the importance of healthy and vibrant lakes in our state.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Shurberg

Recording Secretary and Board Member

Bantam Lake Protective Association