



Connecticut Department of  
**ENERGY &  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Public Hearing – February 15, 2019  
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner-Designee Katie Dykes

**Senate Bill No. 226 – AN ACT AUTHORIZING DUAL LANDINGS OF FISH IN THE STATE**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Senate Bill 226 – AN ACT AUTHORIZING DUAL LANDINGS OF FISH IN THE STATE. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has concerns and **OPPOSES** this proposal **AS DRAFTED** and welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

DEEP generally supports the “dual landing” concept behind this bill. A “dual landing” program represents a common-sense approach to enhancing the efficiency and safety of commercial fishing operations while lessening their environmental impact. The proposed legislation would apply to all fish species for which commercial harvest is permitted. Several commercial fishers have expressed the opinion that while a dual landings program may be advantageous for a species like summer flounder, it would not be for other species and fisheries.

DEEP currently has regulatory authority to implement a “dual landing” program, and has been working in concert with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation to formulate a dual landings program, with a target implementation date of 2020. DEEP feels that such a program would be best enacted in concert with neighboring states through the existing regulatory process.

Taken collectively, DEEP believes that a pilot approach focused on the summer flounder fishery would be most prudent. We believe that approaching the various challenges and concerns raised by the draft legislation through a strategic regulatory approach in concert with nearby states, initially restricted to the winter (January through April) summer flounder fishery, is a better pathway to protecting the long-term viability and interests of Connecticut’s commercial fishing industry.

Allowing commercial fishers to land fish in multiple states during the same fishing trip will allow the industry to operate more efficiently and thus reduce its carbon footprint. Any proposal should enhance the safety of fishing operations as fewer trips will be required to land annual quotas, and will reduce the overall number of “regulatory discards,” or fish that must be discarded overboard on a given trip because they are in excess of current state possession limits.

The enforceability of any dual landings program is a law enforcement concern. DEEP has actively consulted with both DEEP law enforcement personnel and law enforcement from Rhode Island. In DEEP's estimation, the current bill does not include sufficient procedures and safeguards to assure effective compliance with and enforcement of applicable laws by the commercial fishing industry.

DEEP supports the concept behind this legislation, and is willing to work further with the committee on modifying the bill to address our concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Mandi Careathers at [Mandi.careathers@ct.gov](mailto:Mandi.careathers@ct.gov).