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February 15, 2019

To whom it may concern:

I am here today representing a group of Connecticut commercial fishermen and to speak in favor of Environmental Committee Bill No. 226, LCO No. 3787. This bill will help Connecticut fishermen in a number of ways.

Possibly the most important is giving the ability for CT fisherman to land and unload their CT catches in Connecticut while having (licensed) out of state fish aboard. Then they can transit to other states for further unloading. We are hopeful that passing this legislation will lead New York and Rhode Island to follow suit. During the Winter period from January 1st thru April 30th this will make it safer and more profitable for fisherman.

Currently, Connecticut fisherman can only have aboard whatever species of fish in which they are licensed for in the State they are unloading at. Example: A Connecticut vessel has a good weather window for fishing two days offshore. The CT limit is for 600 pounds of fluke. It takes him 6-8 hours to travel to the fishing grounds. Once there, generally the vessel will fish for 24-36 hours to harvest his fluke limit along with other species needed to make a profitable trip. Then if the weather hasn't turned sour another 6-8 hours home. The fishing industry in conjunction with the National Marine Fisheries Service have spent the last 30 years rebuilding fish stocks. With the way the regulations are now written, many stocks, fluke included are considered rebuilt. Many regulations have not kept up with these changes. A very sad fact is that the same vessel that has harvested the CT legal limit of 600 # of fluke needs additional species to cover their expenses for the boat and crew to make a profit. Say this same vessel has a NY fishing license where the limits are 700# per trip and a RI license where the limits are 1500# per trip. As written today, that vessel would have to throw overboard these already dead fluke. As fishermen, we have explained this phenomenon of catching, killing and throwing dead fish overboard for years. Most people can't believe this is happening, but it is. When our vessels are required to take NMFS

observers out on our fishing trips these discards are counted against us. This bill and hopefully more to come will be a step towards correcting this wrong procedure.

We would like the language changed where it is asking for 48 hours prior to undertaking a dual landing to 1-3 hours notice before landing catches during the Winter period. We would suggest to allow the DEEP's discretion on this part of this bill. The current structure in CT and NY seems to be enforceable and working. In a lot of cases the vessels themselves are not able to predict the changes in weather as would be required for a 48 hour notification. A 48 hour restriction could put the boats, Captains and crew members lives in more jeopardy confined to this time line.

We applaud Heather Somers for sponsoring this bill and supporting Connecticut Fisherman. We ask you vote in support for it.

I am available to answer any and all questions pertaining to this bill and any concerns for Connecticut's commercial fishing industry .

Gary Yerman- New London Seafood Dist. , President
Owner- F/V Samantha Brooke II

Rob Morsch- Owner/ Captain- F/V Mystic Way

Scott Yerman- Captain/ Owner- F/V Carley Grace

Jim Kennedy- Captain- F/V Samantha Brooke II

Rick Lofstad- Captain/Owner- F/V All For Joy
Owner- F/V Olivia Joan

Mike Theiler- Owner/Captain- F/V Jeanette T, F/V George & Lila, F/V Emma & Maria

Doug Pogany- Owner/Captain- F/V Kestrel

Gary Rutty- Owner/Captain- F/V Git- Er- Done