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**Testimony**  
**James Berardino**  
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**Connecticut Council of Small Towns**  
**Before the Environment Committee**  
**February 10, 2021**

Good afternoon chairs, co-chairs, members, and ranking members of the Environment Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of **HB-6384, An Act Concerning Aquatic Invasive Species' Effects on Lakes and Related Funding.**

COST urges you to **SUPPORT HB-6384**, which would seek to examine, address, and decrease the effects of invasive aquatic species on the state's lakes, and, more specifically, Middlefield's Lake Beseck. According to the town's First Selectman, Ed Bailey, the current drawdown schedule has not had the desired effect to control the aquatic plant population, which has increased to the point of adversely affecting the use of the lake for recreational purposes. The local community has sent numerous complaints regarding the loss of swimming, fishing, and boating activities in the lake.

Middlefield's Lake Beseck Environment Committee has endorsed the recommendation of extending the six-foot lake drawdowns from December 31<sup>st</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup>. As the lake level is maintained by DEEP in accordance with state statute, **COST asks that the statute be amended to reflect this revised drawdown schedule.**

COST also supports provisions in the bill which require DEEP to prepare an annual report to highlight the efficacy of the Aquatic Invasive Species Stamp program and to develop recommendations to sustain the program, which is critical to addressing concerns regarding aquatic invasive species, which threaten the quality of water bodies throughout the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of the bill.