



FISHERIES ADVISORY COUNCIL - A group of dedicated citizens from all regions of the state working together for fish and fishing in Connecticut.

February 24, 2022

Senator Cohen, Representative Gresko
Environment Committee Co-Chairs
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

Environment Committee Public Hearing – February 25, 2022

H.B. No. 5141 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF CERTAIN FISH SPECIES

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on H.B. 5141. The Connecticut Fisheries Advisory Council (FAC) represents the interests of fish, fish habitat, and anglers throughout the State of Connecticut. Member organizations include the CT Surfcasters Association, CT Bass Nation, Trout Unlimited, CT River Salmon Association, and many others.

The Fisheries Advisory Council supports H.B. 5141. The FAC believes H.B. 5141 is a proactive conservation measure that will help ensure that forage fish populations remain abundant into the future. Furthermore, it is our understanding that the proposed possession limits will not require CT bait fishermen to reduce their reported harvest. The proposed measures are not intended to reduce current harvest levels, rather they are intended to constrain future increases with the intent of ensuring long-term sustainability.

The FAC understands that healthy populations of forage fish are essential for supporting abundant gamefish populations and for maintaining thriving commercial and recreational fisheries. Forage fish populations are also an important food source for many of the birds, reptiles, and marine mammals that live in and adjacent to Connecticut's waters and wetlands. For all of these reasons, the FAC encourages the passage of H.B. 5141. However, the FAC does have two suggestions. We recommend that this proposal should be incorporated into Sec. 26-127 (Conservation of Bait Species) instead of 26-142a. The FAC also recommends the removal of Section 2 of this bill pertaining to bait dealers. We believe the intent of this proposal is to limit the harvest and possession of these forage species on the waters of the state and is not intended to limit the numbers that can be possessed at a place of business.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony. The Fisheries Advisory Council is available at your request to provide information or respond to questions.

Testimony Submitted by William Hyatt, Vice-Chair, on behalf of the Connecticut Fisheries Advisory Council.