



Save the Sound®

**Testimony of Save the Sound
Before the CT Committee on the Environment**

In SUPPORT of HB-5141

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF CERTAIN FISH SPECIES
Submitted by Bill Lucey, Long Island Soundkeeper.
February 23, 2022**

Save the Sound is a nonprofit organization representing over 4,200 member households and 10,000 activists statewide. Our mission is to protect and improve the land, air, and water of Connecticut and the Long Island Sound region. We use legal and scientific expertise to bring citizens together for results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.

Dear Co-Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Gresko, Vice-Chairs Sen. Slap and Rep. Palm, Ranking Members Sen. Miner and Rep. Harding, and all members of the Environment Committee:

Save the Sound (STS) expresses its **support for HB-5141** an act concerning fish protection,

This proposal is a proactive conservation measure to ensure that these four species of forage fish, are protected from potential future overharvest. These fish species are currently unmanaged and there is little up-to-date information on their status aside from harvest reports and past seine surveys. Current records indicate that harvest is well below the bill's trip limit of 200 pounds so existing bait fishing practices won't be affected and are considered to be sustainable.

Forage fish are an important link between plankton and predators. They are crucial to the abundance of marine mammals, sea birds and larger fish such as striped bass and blue fish.

The language should be moved to the Sec. 26-127 of the statutes regarding conservation of baitfish. Another adjustment should remove Section 2 of the bill as it is an unnecessary addition and could cause confusion for bait dealers holding a supply of baitfish for sale in regards to questions about possession limits.

We have already had one LIS forage fish species steeply decline in recent history, the rainbow smelt. There is no evidence that overharvest was a culprit however it is important to manage forage species to understand what their ecological status is and when protection is needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Lucey
Save the Sound - 900 Chapel Street, Suite 2202
New Haven, CT 06510 - (203) 854-5330
blucey@savethesound.org