

Comments of William C. Spicer, III
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For

Field Hearing on HR 307 Long Island Sound Stewardship Act of 2005 House of
Representatives Subcommittee of Fisheries and Oceans

Honorable Representative Wayne T. Gilchrest Chairman, Honorable Representative Rob Simmons, Honorable
Representative Commission Members , Invited Dignitaries and Fellow Citizens,

We need to spend a few moments looking at the background of this initiative. I believe this is approximately the fourth reincarnation of an idea spawned by Audubon New York in conjunction with Save the Sound and the Regional Plan Association. In a "Listen to the Sound 2000" series of hearings, it was called "The need for a reserve system" and expressed a desire to sequester "underwater lands" of Long Island Sound. Testimony was taken and a report published.

I testified at the May 30, 2000 hearing at the Essex Connecticut Town Hall and carefully outlined difficulties and dangers inherent in this reserve concept and vigorously opposed any inclusion of underwater lands in any Long Island Sound reserve concept. Guess what happened next ? I received a nice letter thanking me for my support and when I read the report of the proceedings, I found my comments were either left out or twisted beyond comprehension. Evidently the hearing holders were not about to publish any articulate opposition to their scheme.

A second reincarnation surfaced as the Long Island Sound Stewardship System at a meeting hosted by the Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA) April 9, 2003. A Save the Sound lead person with two assistants joined to explain that "there are going to be areas (of Long Island Sound) that I can't let you use." Questioning by CMTA members brought out that the proposed program was being organized by a very limited steering group, notably excluding any user or commercial groups and they admitted "We don't have a lot of private representation."

The CMTA members in attendance made very clear their disapproval of the plan with numerous well-taken objections.

Nonetheless, the initiative lived on and I read minutes of LISS Management and CAC meetings where discussions were engaged in to try to improve wording of the proposal. Suggestions were made relative to trying to keep who was actually behind the initiative less discernible. Again private sector representatives objected to the inclusion of underwater land.

On March 4, 2004, I testified at a third reincarnation of this effort. The initiators were still the same. The idea of including under water lands had not gone away, but was not being quite as conspicuously flaunted. The marine trades groups and commercial users were not listed in the masthead as supporters and the problems and dangers remained the same as in earlier reincarnations.

Now we have HR 307 before us. The previous initiators- Audubon New York, Save the Sound, and the Regional Plan Association- have continued to press this on. In fact these initiators are represented by four of the six public testifiers to this hearing. Mr. Grant Westerson, Executive Director of the Connecticut Marine Trades Association, and I are the other two. I thank the committee for recognizing the need to hear a balance view.

These Audubon Associations, Save the Sound, and Regional Plan Association initiators do not represent the interests of Connecticut's waterfront community stakeholders.

Connecticut's real waterfront stakeholders who have generally been excluded from the planning process are virtually unanimous in their opposition to any underwater areas being included in this legislation. Remove any reference to any underwater area of any kind in Connecticut waters being included in this bill.

Honorable Representative Pombo: Please do not allow this Bill HR 307 to come out of the committee if any inclusion of any Connecticut underwater areas exists in this Bill HR 307 . Connecticut's real waterfront stakeholder community who have been excluded from the planning of this initiative will back you 100%.

Sincerely,

William C. Spicer, III

