



Substitute House Bill No. 6384

Public Act No. 21-12

AN ACT CONCERNING AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES EFFECTS ON LAKES AND RELATED FUNDING, CERTAIN GROUP FISHING EVENTS AND ELIMINATING THE SEASON LIMITATION FOR THE TAKING OF TROUT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 22a-339h of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

On or before November 1, [2006] 2021, the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall enter into an agreement with the town of Middlefield and the Lake Beseck Association regarding a schedule for annual water level draw downs of Lake Beseck. Water level draw downs shall be three feet during even-numbered years with completion achieved by December first of such year and maintained until March first of the following year. Water level draw downs shall be six feet during odd-numbered years achieved by November first of such year and maintained until [December] January thirty-first of [such] the following year; a three-foot water level draw down shall be maintained thereafter until March first of the following year. Such water level draw downs are designed to balance the various concerns of the lake community, including: Recreational needs, preservation of lakefront infrastructure, fisheries habitat and other natural resource concerns.

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Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than October 1, 2021, the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall submit a report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the environment on the amount of revenue collected from the Aquatic Invasive Species fees authorized pursuant to section 14-21bb of the general statutes and the number, value and purpose of any grants to municipalities and not-for-profit organizations awarded from the Connecticut Lakes, Rivers and Ponds Preservation account in accordance with section 14-21aa of the general statutes. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall provide the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection with any information necessary to perform the requirements of this section. Such report may include any recommendations from the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection on additional means for funding projects to control or eradicate aquatic invasive species by municipalities and lake authorities.

Sec. 3. Subsection (h) of section 26-30 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(h) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may issue a group fishing license to any tax-exempt organization qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as amended from time to time, for the purpose of conducting a group fishing event or events for persons: (1) With a service-related or other disability who receive services at a facility of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Connecticut Healthcare System, (2) who receive mental health or addiction services from: (A) The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, (B) state-operated facilities, as defined in section 17a-458, or (C) programs or facilities funded by the

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Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, as provided for in sections 17a-468b, 17a-469, 17a-673 and 17a-676, (3) with intellectual disability who receive services from the Department of Developmental Services, as provided for in section 17a-217, or from facilities licensed by the Department of Developmental Services, as provided for in section 17a-227, (4) diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who receive services from the Department of Social Services, or (5) receiving care from the Department of Children and Families, as provided for in section 17a-94, or from programs or child-care facilities licensed pursuant to section 17a-145 or 17a-147. Any such organization shall conduct not more than fifty such events, including marine and inland water events, in any calendar year and each such event shall be limited to not more than [fifty] one hundred persons. Application for such a group fishing license shall be submitted once per calendar year on a form prescribed by the commissioner and with the necessary fee and shall provide such information as required by the commissioner. All fishing activities conducted pursuant to such group license shall be supervised by staff or volunteers of the organization conducting the event or events. Such staff or volunteers shall possess such group fishing license at the site of any such event or events. Each such staff member or volunteer shall have a license to fish. Such organization shall, not later than ten days after such group fishing event, report to the commissioner, on forms provided by the commissioner, information on the results of such event. Such information shall include, but not be limited to, the total: (A) Number of participants, (B) hours fished, (C) number of each species caught, and (D) number of each species not released. Such organization shall not charge a fee to any person that participates in any such group fishing event conducted pursuant to such group fishing license and any such group fishing event shall not be used by such organization as a fund raising event.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Notwithstanding any provision of title 26 of the general statutes, there shall be no closed season for sport

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fishing of trout, provided nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's authority to regulate the method and manner of take for such trout.

Approved May 20, 2021