

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5526 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING RECIPROCITY FOR CERTAIN INLAND WATERS

Title: FISHING LICENSES.

Vote Date: 3/18/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/13/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee

CO-SPONSORS

Representative Jason Rojas, 9th District

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill is to establish reciprocity for inland waters fishing licenses between Connecticut and neighboring states. Any person who holds a license to fish in inland waters in the state of New York, Massachusetts or Rhode Island may fish in inland waters in Connecticut, or waters as negotiated by the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Substitute language allows residents of New York, Massachusetts, or Rhode Island to fish in Connecticut's inland waters without a nonresident license—but only if those states grant the same privilege to Connecticut residents. All other fishing laws and regulations would still apply.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner, Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP)

Commissioner Dykes opposes HB-5526 because Connecticut General Statutes Section 26-46 already authorizes reciprocal fishing privileges between New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. She further cites RCSA 26-112-46, which allows license reciprocity for specific inland border waterbodies, and allows residents of each state to fish in identified water bodies

along the state boundary with a fishing license from their home state. However, she explains that neighboring states have not pursued broader agreements with Connecticut to extend fishing license reciprocity to all inland waters, which would suggest that broad reciprocity is not desired by adjacent states. Further, she states that establishing broader reciprocity could significantly reduce revenue for nonresident fishing licenses. She offers that reducing license revenue would negatively impact DEEP's fisheries and wildlife conservation programs, as license revenues are a critical revenue stream for these programs.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Matthew Burke, Youth Education Coordinator for Trout Unlimited

In his testimony, Mr. Burke shares that he is a science educator, conservationist, and an avid fisherman. He explains that by establishing reciprocity for inland fishing licenses, it would make access to these shared fisheries simpler and more consistent for anglers. In turn, it would encourage participation in outdoor recreation and support local economies that benefit from fishing related tourism.

6 Citizens Support House Bill 5526

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Alton Blodgett, concern citizen

Alton Blodgett, expressed opposition to this bill because the subsequent loss of revenue from out of state licenses depletes funds from the already underfunded fisheries and wildlife divisions of DEEP.

2 Citizens Oppose House Bill 5526

Reported by: Laura Sansur
Reviewed by: Luna Romani

Date: 03/24/2026