



**State of Connecticut**  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONN. 06106

October 23, 2025

The Honorable Ned Lamont  
Governor  
Executive Chambers  
State Capitol  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Lamont:

We are writing to express serious concerns regarding the \$1 million funding cut to the Connecticut Fish Hatcheries program, administered by the state's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, in the biennial budget passed this spring.

As you know, the Connecticut Fish Hatcheries program is essential to our aquatic wildlife ecosystem and broader environment, and its economic impact should not be underestimated. According to DEEP's own statistics, with over 4.4 million fishing days enjoyed by adult anglers annually, fishing generates an estimated \$436 million in annual economic benefits to the state—and the Fish Hatcheries program plays a vital role in sustaining this activity. The program artificially cultivates and breeds fish in controlled environments with managed water conditions, food, and disease control until they are ready for stocking in rivers and lakes. For over 100 years, Connecticut has used these fish-culture techniques to augment, enhance, and restore both native and introduced fish populations to support quality fishing experiences.

Given the significant environmental and economic benefits, House Republicans proposed maintaining this funding in our budget, directly countering your proposed cut. Members of the Environment Committee wrote to the Appropriations Committee in bipartisan fashion to express similar concerns about the proposal.

During budget negotiations, we understood that Democratic leadership and you were seeking spending reductions to remain below the statutory spending cap while protecting their caucus priorities. However, it was our clear understanding that this particular cut would not be implemented. The Appropriations Committee budget restored the funding to the proposal.

Consequently, we—along with program administrators and sportsmen throughout Connecticut—were shocked to see this \$1 million reduction over FY 25 and FY 26 to such a vital program materialize in the final budget. This is especially troubling given that considerably larger amounts were allocated through budgetary earmarks to various small organizations with minimal justification or transparency.

We request answers to the following questions: Who made the final decision to reduce the Hatcheries program budget by \$1 million over two years and why? Why was the Appropriations Committee recommendation to include the funding ignored? Your proposed budget said the cut would be to reflect current fish hatchery needs, what has changed with the program that would reflect the need for a lower funding amount? If people pay annually for a license and stamp fee to benefit the fisheries program,

where is that money going? With there projected to be excess budget money, why was this cut deemed necessary?

This situation exemplifies precisely why House Republicans fought in 2017 to secure dedicated line-item funding for this program, ensuring transparency and accountability to lawmakers and the public.

Beyond seeking an explanation for how this cut transpired, we urge you to reverse this decision by reallocating funds from other awards and restoring full funding to the Fish Hatcheries program—for the benefit of Connecticut's environment and the outdoor enthusiasts who contribute millions of dollars to our economy annually.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We look forward to your response, as do the environmentalists and outdoor sports enthusiasts in your districts.

Sincerely,



Patrick Callahan  
State Representative



Tammy Nuccio  
State Representative