

**CITIZENS  
CAMPAIGN**  
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

[www.citizenscampaign.org](http://www.citizenscampaign.org)



☐ 225A Main Street • Farmingdale, NY 11735  
516-390-7150  
☐ 19 Court Street, Lower Level • White Plains, NY 10601  
914-997-0946  
☐ 744 Broadway • Albany, NY 12207  
518-772-1862  
☐ 735 Delaware Road, Box 140 • Buffalo, NY 14223  
716-831-3206  
☐ 466 Westcott Street, 2nd Floor • Syracuse, NY 13210  
315-472-1339  
☐ 129 Church Street, Suite 221 • New Haven, CT 06510  
203-785-9080

Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

Comments to the Department of Environmental Protection: Lobster Moratorium  
Testimony by Brittany Ferenz, Connecticut Program Coordinator  
July 12, 2010

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Brittany Ferenz and I am the Connecticut Program Coordinator for Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE). CCE represents over 80,000 members in Connecticut and New York. CCE works to empower communities and advocate solutions for sound environmental policy to protect public health and the natural environment. **CCE strongly recommends a holistic approach to protect the Long Island Sound and its maritime heritage. We are strongly opposed to the proposed lobster moratorium.**

Every body of water has a species that defines and embodies the culture and the history of the waterway. For the Long Island Sound this is the Lobster. In the past 10 years there has been a 95% decrease in lobsters and subsequently, we have seen a significant impact on our lobstermen, a profession historically tied to the ancestry of the Sound dating back generations. A 5 year moratorium on lobstermen would sacrifice the history of our maritime culture and wipe out any future for this industry. Here in Connecticut there are only 32 lobstermen left in our state, this moratorium would leave 0.

It is CCE's position that Lobstermen are to the sea, as farmers are to the land. We would never require 32 farmers to abandon their livelihoods, family history and hope for the future and we should apply the same respect to our lobsterman. A moratorium should be an act of last resort – used only when other meaningful federal actions have failed to produce positive results. We need a management plan that is responsible and sustainable for the lobster industry. CCE recommends two viable alternatives to keep our lobstermen in LI Sound and protect the lobster population:

**1. A Bi-State Federally Funded V-Notch Program**

In 2006, the Connecticut legislature responded to the dwindling lobster population by rolling out the Lobster-V notch program. This required participating lobstermen who caught a female lobster 3 inches or more in length to cut a notch in its tail three-eighths of an inch deep. The

state paid for the notched lobsters thrown back into the water, and other fishermen would be prohibited from landing the creature until its tail had completely re grown. The V-Notch program also served as a valuable educational opportunity that taught the next generation about the Sound, sustainable shellfish harvesting and species protection. The program is a mere \$300,000 per year. In 2008, there were 67,000 lobsters notched and the lobstermen were compensated \$180,000; a laudable achievement. However, each consecutive year, CCE, the lobstermen and other environmental groups fought for funding, and each year the allocation was reduced. However, even though CT ran a less aggressive program than promised, the DEP still deserves a great deal of credit for execution and commitment. New York, on the other hand has declined to implement a V-notch program, which clearly diminishes the effectiveness of preserving and restoring the lobster population. This program needs to be advanced in a bi-state holistic venture in order to be effective.

In October of 2009, CCE was asked to testify to a US Congressional Committee on efforts needed to protect LIS. Our testimony stated, “The federal government can play a key role in the recovery of the lobster population and the preservation our maritime culture by expanding this program and ensuring a stable, reliable stream of funding for the three years for both NY and CT.” And yet, the federal government has offered no assistance, New York has offered no assistance and now the only plan seems to be to abolish the lobster industry.

## **2. Implementing a one year moratorium with Financial Restitution for the Lobstermen prior to establishing a bi-state V-notch program.**

A one year moratorium with financial restitution allows lobsterman to remain solvent and return to harvesting lobsters. This moratorium allows ample time for state and federal agencies to work with lobstermen to craft a more sustainable lobster harvesting management program, which includes a V-Notch program and other agreed upon management techniques. Lobstermen have demonstrated a willingness to work collaboratively with state agencies and now our federal government must do the same. This management plan should include placing restrictions on new lobstermen. Such a program is now in place to assist the restoration of hard shell clams in the South Shore Estuary Reserve on Long Island. Due to the struggling clam population, Suffolk County enforced a two year moratorium on new clam permits. Those that have prior permits between the years of 2006-2009 could continue to clam although no new permits are issued. This understands the value and culture of the bay by managing species without destroying the historic pastime. LI Sound can do the same.

In conclusion, a five year moratorium is draconian and should ONLY be used as an action of last resort not the first step towards restoration. CCE believes that if our federal agencies worked collaboratively with NYS and CT and the lobsterman we could shape a plan that allows lobstermen to continue the essential role they play in LI Sound. Frankly, it is our view that federal inaction helped get us to the critical junction but federal action could move us in the right direction.