



February 27, 2025

Senator Lopes, Representative Parker
Environment Committee Co-Chairs
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

Environment Committee Public Hearing – March 3, 2025

H.B. 6248 – AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MORATORIUM ON FISHING FOR STRIPED BASS IN THE LOWER HOUSATONIC RIVER

The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on H.B. 6248. We respectfully oppose this bill, which proposes a striped bass fishing moratorium on the Housatonic River.

ASA represents the nation’s recreational fishing industry, including manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers, and advocacy groups. We champion America’s 57.7 million anglers, whose sportfishing activities generate \$148 billion annually for the U.S. economy while advancing social, economic, and conservation goals.

ASA is committed to rebuilding the striped bass population. Recent management changes by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission have reduced fishing mortality to an estimated 30-year low, aided by a strict recreational slot limit. H.B. 6248’s moratorium on the Housatonic River would have little impact on this recovering population. Rather, it would unfairly penalize local, law-abiding anglers who are dedicated advocates for meaningful conservation.

A 2023-2024 study of the Housatonic River’s winter holdover striped bass fishery found low legal harvests and virtually no mortality among released fish. However, since November 2023, illegal commercial fishing has emerged as a significant concern on the Housatonic River. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s (DEEP) enforcement team has responded with fines, yet the current \$75 penalty is not significant enough to deter illegal activity. Increasing the fine to \$150+ would bolster enforcement efforts to deter poaching while also allowing the legal striped bass fishery to continue on the Housatonic.

The striped bass fishery on the Housatonic River is important to both Connecticut and visiting anglers. Please allow the legal fishery to continue. Thank you for considering our input on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Michael Waine
Atlantic Fisheries Policy Director
American Sportfishing Association

AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION

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