

Notice of Intent to Amend Regulations and Notice of Public Hearing

The Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, pursuant to Sections 4-168(a) and 22a-6 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), hereby gives notice of her intention to amend Sections 26-112-43, 26-112-45, 26-112-46, and 26-112-48 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA). These regulations will be adopted under the authority of Section 26-112 of the General Statutes.

The proposed amendments to the regulations will amend regulations concerning definitions of bait; artificial lure, fly, fly fishing, hook, catch and release fishing, center pin fishing and possession limits; establishment of a statewide minimum length for trout; and Special Management Areas, including Boundary Waters, Trout Management Areas, Trout Management Lakes, Bass Management Areas, Wild Trout Management Areas, Trout Parks, Sea Run Trout Streams, and Chain Pickerel Lakes. Additionally, technical and conforming changes, minor revisions, clarifications and corrections are made.

These proposals are intended to provide additional recreational fishing opportunities and enhance existing fishing opportunities, while providing additional protections for the State's fisheries resources, especially wild trout.

Below is a summary of the proposed changes:

Section 1. Updates definitions of "Bait," "Fly," "Fly Fishing," "Hook," and "Possession Limit"; and establishes definitions for "Artificial Lure/Lure," "Catch and Release," and "Center Pin Fishing" and removes a definition for "Bobbing."

Section 2. Establishes a statewide minimum length of nine (9) inches for trout; adds Wharton Brook Pond (Allen Pond), Wallingford, to the list of lakes and ponds with a reduced creel limit (3 fish per day) for catfish and removes "Bobbing" as a method of take.

Section 3. Amends multiple Special Management Areas, Most notably, Crystal Lake is removed from the list of Trout Management Lakes, a thermal refuge is designated at Highland Lake, a new Bass Management Area is established on the entire Housatonic River from the Massachusetts border to the Bleachery Dam (New Milford) with catch and release only regulations for black bass, nineteen new class 1 Wild Trout Management Areas (WTMAs) are designated, three Class 3 WTMAs redesignated as Class 1

WMTAs and three Class 3 WTMAAs eliminated; three new Trout Parks (Macedonia Brook, Mashamoquet Brook and Kettletown Brook) are established, three streams are removed from the list of Sea-Run Trout Streams, and three lakes (East Twin Lake, West Twin Lake, and Wononskopomuc Lake) designated as Chain Pickerel Management Lakes.

Section 4. Establishes a daily creel limit of zero (“Catch and Release” only fishing) for all fish species at Plymouth Reservoir (Plymouth) as requested by the Town of Plymouth.

Additionally, there are several technical changes and updates.

The proposed regulations, statement of purpose, a regulatory flexibility analysis and a fiscal note indicating no additional expense to the state or municipal governments to implement these proposed regulations are posted and available for download (pdf) on the eRegulations system (<https://eregulations.ct.gov/eRegsPortal/>). They are also posted on the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s Fisheries Division webpage (<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEPFishing>).

Copies of the proposed regulations, statement of purpose, regulatory flexibility analysis and fiscal note are also available by contacting the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s Fisheries Division by phone (860-424-3474) or by email (deep.inland.fisheries@ct.gov).

One public hearing has been scheduled to obtain public comment to determine whether to adopt the proposed regulations or to adjust the measures. This hearing will be held through Zoom, a remote online public hearing platform. All interested persons are invited to express their views on the proposed regulations at the following public hearing:

Date: May 8, 2024.

Time: 7:00 pm.

Zoom Link: https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwrcO2ppzsiGdy5m_DVD003YQ-KKDwcF1pm

Interested persons may also choose to present their views regarding the proposed regulations in writing during the public comment period. Written comments should be submitted no later than 11:59 PM on May 31, 2024. Based on public comment, the proposed regulations may be adjusted to meet the objective of the proposal. Comments may be submitted using one of the following methods:

- Online via the eRegulations system (<https://eregulations.ct.gov/eRegsPortal/>) on the Secretary of State’s website. Go to “Open for Public comment”, select this regulation and follow instructions for submitting comments.
- By email to william.foreman@ct.gov.
- By mail or delivery service to Bill Foreman at the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Fisheries Division, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT, 06106-5127.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer that is committed to complying with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please contact us at (860) 418-5910 or deep.accommodations@ct.gov if you: have a disability and need a communication aid or service; have limited proficiency in English and may need

information in another language; or if you wish to file an ADA or Title VI discrimination complaint. Any person needing a hearing accommodation may call the State of Connecticut relay number - 711. To facilitate efforts to provide an accommodation, please request all accommodations as soon as possible following notice of any agency hearing, meeting, program, or event.



Katie S. Dykes
Commissioner
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection