

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-148 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO AQUACULTURE RELATED

Title: STATUTES.

Vote Date: 3/4/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/20/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to make technical revisions and clean-ups to statutes surrounding aquaculture. Overall, the bill makes technical corrections, modernizes notification methods, and removes obsolete statutory language related to aquaculture regulation.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE LCO 2577

Substitute language required notification to municipal shellfish commissions when also making requisite notice to local public health officials.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Bryan Hurlburt, Commissioner, CT Department of Agriculture

Hurlburt, testified in support of this bill, which proposes technical updates to state aquaculture statutes. The bill aims to modernize communication and remove outdated provisions.

Section 1: Updates how shellfish area closures are communicated. Instead of requiring notices in newspapers, the department would post closures on its website and send electronic notifications to towns and directly to shellfish harvesters via text and email. This improves timeliness and reduces costs. **Section 2:** Repeals the outdated “Shellfish Police” statute. These positions have not been used for years, and enforcement responsibilities are currently handled through an agreement with environmental conservation officers from the state’s environmental agency.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Laura Pallandre, Farmer & Farmers Market Manager, Slowpoke Farm

Pallandre, is a third-year farmer running a small market garden that produces about 20 types of fruits and vegetables, along with a flock of 30 chickens, some geese, and a rabbit. She also manages a community food scrap composting program on her farm and at a weekly Saturday farmers market. About 50 households likely participate, dropping off food scraps in a bucket-swap system. Processing the scraps—adding bokashi flakes and transferring them into sealed buckets—takes her about five hours each week. She also received a \$7,000 grant from Greater Hartford Gives to support a project where Bloomfield High School students collect cafeteria food scraps and compost them with chickens at the Agriscience Center. Despite these efforts and community programs, Laura says she is struggling financially. In her first year she lost 90% of her crops due to drought because her irrigation relies on rainwater collected from her roof. She has had to take off-farm jobs to stay afloat. After investing significant labor in soil improvements (such as sheet mulching paths with wood chips), her production improved and she was able to sell at two farmers markets and to Bloomfield Schools. She asks that funding programs support beginning farmers dealing with climate-related challenges such as drought, heavy rain, and wind damage to infrastructure like high tunnels. She believes this kind of support would help new farmers survive early obstacles and build a more resilient local food system in Connecticut.

Sarah Dzialo, Private Citizen

Dzialo, testified in support of SB-148, a bill that clarifies how notifications of shellfish area closures are communicated. She argues that transparent and timely information is essential for a functioning free market, allowing fishermen, consumers, and businesses to make informed decisions. By improving how closure notifications are communicated, the bill would reduce risk, increase market efficiency, and support voluntary economic activity. She notes that the bill does not add new regulations or funding but simply improves communication about existing regulatory decisions, helping private actors respond more effectively.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

No opposition for this bill.

Reported by: Luna Romani

Date: 03/06/2026