



General Assembly

February Session, 2026

Raised Bill No. 5333

LCO No. 1651



Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:
(ENV)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FISHERIES IN THE STATE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Notwithstanding any
2 provision of title 26 of the general statutes, any person who violates any
3 regulation concerning the taking of striped bass, whether in the marine
4 or inland waters of the state, shall have committed an infraction and
5 shall pay a fine of two hundred fifty dollars for a first offense, three
6 hundred fifty dollars for a second offense and five hundred dollars for
7 a third or any such subsequent offense, by mail, or plead not guilty in
8 accordance with the provisions of section 51-164n of the general statutes,
9 provided for any infraction imposed pursuant to this section, the
10 amount of such fine shall be paid to the municipality where the
11 infraction occurred.

12 Sec. 2. Section 26-292d of the general statutes is repealed and the
13 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

14 (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of this title, no person shall
15 engage in the hand-harvesting of horseshoe crabs or the eggs of

16 horseshoe crabs from the waters of this state.

17 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section,
18 the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may
19 authorize the hand-harvesting of horseshoe crabs by permit for
20 educational or scientific purposes provided the commissioner
21 determines that such harvesting will not cause harm to the horseshoe
22 crab population in this state.

23 (c) (1) No person shall engage in the harvesting of horseshoe crabs or
24 eggs of horseshoe crabs from the waters of the state for use as bait.

25 (2) No person shall use a horseshoe crab or eggs of a horseshoe crab
26 as bait.

27 ~~[(c)]~~ (d) Any person who violates the provisions of subsection (b) or
28 (c) of this section shall be fined twenty-five dollars for each specimen
29 taken in violation of this section.

30 ~~[(d)]~~ (e) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection
31 shall enforce the provisions of this section.

32 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2026*) Notwithstanding any
33 provision of title 26 of the general statutes, any food service
34 establishment that is regulated pursuant to the Public Health Code may
35 sell to customers a lobster with a maximum carapace length of not more
36 than six and one-quarter inches, provided any such lobster with a
37 carapace length of greater than five and one-quarter inches was taken
38 and landed in a federal Lobster Management Area that authorizes the
39 taking and landing of such lobster.

40 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2026*) Notwithstanding any
41 provision of title 26 of the general statutes, the method of take for striped
42 bass during the period commencing December first and ending April
43 thirtieth shall be catch and release only.

44 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2026*) Notwithstanding the

45 provisions of title 26 of the general statutes, for the period commencing
46 December first and ending April thirtieth, no person shall bait fish in the
47 Housatonic River downstream of the Derby Dam.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	26-292d
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To clarify penalties for violating regulations concerning the taking of striped bass, prohibit the use of horseshoe crabs as bait, authorize the sale of certain lobsters from out-of-state by food service establishments and prohibit certain bait fishing in the Housatonic River and harvesting of striped bass.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]