

House Republican Press Release

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DEP Priorities on River Fishing Backwards



State Agency Protects Established Fish; Jeopardizes Spawning Areas

HARTFORD- State Representative Larry Miller (R-122) today applauded a decision by the State's Department of Environmental Protection in renewing the prohibition on taking alewives and blueback herring from most Connecticut waters. Following a 2002 decline in population for both kinds of fish, the DEP has issued such an order every year. This newest one will last until March 31, 2008.

However, Miller continued to criticize DEP officials for allowing the continued dredging material of Caswell Cove to be deposited in Shelton, saying it demonstrates conflicting priorities.

"The DEP has rightly ordered a renewal of the prohibition of fishing for blueback herring and alewives as those species continue to face challenges in the renewal of their stocks in Connecticut waters," said Miller. "Yet, DEP may very well be allowing the dumping contaminated fill from Caswell Cove into Shelton waters where spawning activity takes place."

The DEP granted a permit last month for Caswell Cove to dredge 23,000 cubic yards of sediment that is filling the boat mooring area without notifying local officials. The sediment removed from the marina will be deposited upstream along the Housatonic River in Shelton. Miller says the permit should be revoked.

"If the DEP is serious about renewing the populations of these fish, they might want to think twice about dumping fill on spawning areas for these two species," said Miller.

Miller noted that alewives spawn from late March into May, and blueback herring spawn from April into August.

"I will be speaking once again to DEP concerning this issue," said Miller.