

Report to House Fish & Wildlife Committee from House Corrections & Institutions  
Re: Fish & Wildlife & Water Quality projects in the Capital Bill  
From: Rep. Cynthia Browning, approved by Rep. Emmons, January 27, 2015

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HCIC has had presentations concerning Fish & Wildlife projects proposed for Capital Bill funding. It would be particularly useful to have any guidance about policy priorities in terms of the fish hatcheries and fish stocking given the future capital needs of up to about \$17 million (not requested this year). Reports on Water Quality allocations will follow as testimony unfolds.

A total of \$2 million dollars is requested for Fish & Wildlife projects in this Capital Bill across the two years.

Conservation Camps & Shooting Ranges ..... \$500,000  
Upgrading infrastructure & facilities, improving safety

Roxbury Hatchery – Construction & Bid documents ..... \$400,000

This project is rebuilding the hatchery destroyed during Tropical Storm Irene. The facility will be rebuilt and made flood resilient and consistent with current water quality standards. The project will ultimately cost about \$5.5 million. It is not yet clear how much FEMA will contribute to this. The facility has historic importance and functional importance in the fishery stocking program and outreach to the public. If trout are not continuing to be raised at this site, which also contains a district office, the property will revert to the heirs of the original private property owner.

*Comment: While the committee understands all the reasons why the rebuilding of this hatchery is of importance to the state, \$5.5 million is an awful lot of money. Even though it is not requested in this year's bill, before we commit to bid documents we need a full understanding of why this project should move forward under the limits on bonding capacity that we will continue to face in future years.*

Hatchery Improvements .....\$700,000

Roof of Bald Hill Hatchery, recirculator at Ed Weed Hatchery, improvements in pollution control at the Salisbury Hatchery, other improvements at the Bennington Hatchery.

*Comment: One of the significant issues for many of the hatcheries, especially those in the Lake Champlain basin, is meeting current water quality standards. It is not that the pollution from the fish raising is that intense, but in some cases a hatchery is using water from a spring that ultimately flows into a stream, so the effluent is a large fraction of the total flow. Upgrading the Salisbury Hatchery, which produces trout eggs for all of the others, and is in the LC basin, will ultimately cost up to \$12 million in the near future. We will essentially have to build a sewage treatment plant for the fish raising waste. This also appears to some on the committee to be a great deal of money. .... The committee did receive testimony concerning the long term strategy of the state in terms of fish stocking and the need for the hatcheries. In the very long run (decades?) it appears to be the strategy of F&W that as much as possible habitat conditions should be improved so that natural reproduction is sufficient to maintain*

*our fisheries. However, it will always be necessary to stock in some water bodies with intense fishing interest but compromised habitat, and the hatcheries serve educational functions as well as provision for angling opportunities. Yet it is somewhat daunting for HCIC to consider investing \$17.7 million in borrowed money in such facilities in the face of the need to invest in cleaning up Lake Champlain and also to invest in significant chunks of Information Technology for Finance and Management and AHS.*

Wildlife Management Area Infrastructure .....	\$150,000
Docks, cabins, restrooms, etc.	
Fishing Access Areas .....	\$100,000
Upgrades to existing fishing access areas and docks.	