

## LARSON URGES SENATE SUPPORT FOR STUDY TO NAME

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### LARSON URGES SENATE SUPPORT FOR STUDY TO NAME LOWER FARMINGTON RIVER AND SALMON BROOK A FEDERALLY-PROTECTED WATERWAY

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) urged the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks Thursday to support the extension of federal protection to the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook in testimony he submitted to the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks.

The Senate Subcommittee is holding hearings on the proposed Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic River Study Act (S. 435). The bill commissions a feasibility study to evaluate whether the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook, a major tributary, qualifies as a Wild and Scenic Partnership River within the National Park Service's National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Larson is a co-sponsor of companion legislation in the House, which has been referred to the House Resources Subcommittee on National Parks for further action. The upper Farmington River — a 14 mile stretch that runs from the base of Goodwin Dam in Hartland to the downstream border of Canton and New Hartford — received federal designation and accompanying protection in 1994. The new act would provide protection to the river's remaining 40 miles. The lower river stretches from the lower Collinsville Dam in Burlington to the Rainbow Dam in Windsor.

Larson said that the upper (western) branch of the river has thrived as a natural, environmental and recreational resource. The rest of the river deserves the same protection from encroachment.

The text of the Congressman's testimony is as follows:

Chairman Thomas, Ranking Member Akaka and members of the Subcommittee on National Parks, thank you for this opportunity to express my strong support for S. 435, the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic River Study Act. As a cosponsor of the companion legislation in the House, I join the entire Connecticut delegation in supporting the federal designation and protection of the lower section of the Farmington River. I would also like to commend and thank my two delegation colleagues, Senator Dodd and Senator Lieberman, for their leadership on this issue.

Since 1968, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System has protected the Nation's most valuable rivers. Through this system, rivers that possess remarkable scenic, recreational, natural, and cultural values are preserved in their free-flowing condition and are protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Designated rivers are afforded the federal protection necessary to maintain their resources and character.

Connecticut is fortunate to be the home of the Farmington River, which hosts a wealth of natural beauty, a variety of wildlife, and a cultural past important to our state, region, and nation. In 1994, Congress recognized the upper section of the Farmington — a 14 mile-long stretch that runs from the base of the Goodwin Dam in Hartland to the downstream border of Canton and New Hartford, as Wild and Scenic. As a federally protected river segment, the natural splendor and resources of the Upper Farmington have been managed cooperatively on the local, state and federal level for over a decade. Regrettably, Salmon Brook — a major tributary and the Lower Farmington running 40 miles from Canton to its confluence with the Connecticut River in Windsor does not share the same federal protection. Continued threats to the River's water quality reinforces the urgent need for a collaborative effort to preserve the unique character of both the Upper and Lower Farmington, as well as Salmon Brook, for present and future generations.

The Lower Farmington is a rare natural, cultural and recreational area for the people of the First District and throughout the entire state of Connecticut. The River's free-flowing waters support a rich ecological system and serves as the habitat for diverse fish species, including the American shad and the Atlantic salmon. The River is also home to trout, river otter and bald eagle populations. Since the 1600s, the River has prominently been featured in our state history, from the Tunxis Native American tribes who settled on its shores to the mills and dams that sprung-up as part of the Industrial Revolution. Today, people from across Connecticut can enjoy the majestic views of the River along the Farmington River Trail — a former railroad line that when completed will run 26 miles along the shores of the Farmington .

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for holding this hearing and giving me the opportunity to submit testimony in support of S. 435 and H.R. 1344. I am confident that the Lower Farmington and Salmon Brook are essential additions to the Wild and Scenic River System and I look forward to the support of the Committee on this important issue.

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