



DANNEL P. MALLOY
GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

June 15, 2012

The Honorable Denise Merrill
Secretary of the State
30 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Madam Secretary:

I hereby return, without my signature, House Bill 5304, *An Act Concerning the Training and Authority of Certain Constables Appointed for Fish and Game Protection*. This bill creates a specific exemption for fish and game constables appointed by a town in Hartford County having a population between 44,000 and 50,000 from the Police Officers Standards and Training Council's ("POST") certification provisions contained in Connecticut General Statute § 7-294d. Because such constables may carry firearms and perform certain police functions, they should not be exempted from certification requirements critical to public safety. Additionally, the bill conflicts with a legal opinion previously issued on the subject by the Office of The Attorney General ("OAG").

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 7-294a specifically states that "police officers" include an appointed constable who performs criminal law enforcement duties. Fish and game constables are such appointed individuals, and may perform criminal law enforcement duties. In the OAG legal opinion, former Attorney General Blumenthal concluded that even with their limited jurisdiction, fish and game constables are "police officers" within the meaning of § 7-294a. As such, they were previously subject to the authority of the Municipal Police Training Council ("MPTC"), (currently POST), which oversees the training and certification requirements of police officers pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat § 7-294d.

Although the bill requires fish and game constables to complete basic training and certification requirements tailored to their duties, this falls short of the rigorous training requirements necessary for POST certification. Indeed, POST requires successful completion of, among other things, hundreds of hours of basic training, appropriate field training, a written test and oral interview conducted by a POST certified police officer, polygraph testing, fingerprinting, a background investigation, and physical fitness requirements.

Public safety demands that fish and game officers be held to rigorous training standards as with any other individual permitted to carry a weapon in this state performing police functions.

POST has been effective in standardizing law enforcement training regulations within Connecticut. Allowing this bill to become law would invite requests for further exemptions – eroding existing and effective public safety standards.

For these reasons, I disapprove of H.B. 5304, *An Act Concerning the Training and Authority of Certain Constables Appointed for Fish and Game Protection*. Pursuant to Section 15 of Article Fourth of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, I am returning H.B. 5304 without my signature.

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor