



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
March 16, 2007**

W. David LeVasseur
Under Secretary, Intergovernmental Policy Division
Office of Policy and Management

Testimony Concerning Raised Bill No. 5249

**AN ACT REQUIRING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS PRIOR TO THE CONVEYANCE OF
STATE LAND TO A MUNICIPALITY**

Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Raised Bill No. 5249 - An Act Requiring Environmental Impact Statements Prior to the Conveyance of State Land to a Municipality.

On March 7, 2007, various OPM staff members and I met with representatives of the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, the Rivers Alliance, the Council on Environmental Quality, the League of Conservation Voters and the Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions, Inc., to discuss this bill and the collective concerns of this group of entities that led to this proposal.

What we heard, loud and clear, was that while this group was generally pleased with the DEP review processes, they have a significant concern that surplus state lands are being transferred from State ownership without a formal process by which the general public can comment on such transfers.

OPM concurs with those who say that the existing process by which surplus real property is transferred from State ownership lacks the ability for the public to comment. Therefore, by September 1, 2007, OPM is committed to developing a set of internal processes and procedures by which public comment will be solicited prior to surplus real property being transferred from State ownership.

While we have not yet finalized all of the logistics, it is our intention to place a notice on the OPM website regarding proposed transfers of such surplus property from State ownership, in order to solicit comments from any interested member of the public. Any comments that OPM receives will be forwarded to the appropriate State agency, which will be responsible for reviewing the comments and making a recommendation to OPM regarding the ultimate transfer of the surplus real property.

On March 9, 2007, we informed the representative of the Connecticut Fund for the Environment of our intention; that representative then notified the March 7 meeting attendees of our proposed plan. While it was generally well received by that representative, we have not yet heard from all the members of the groups with whom we met.

Despite that fact, we are moving ahead with our plans to solicit public comment regarding surplus State property by placing notice of these properties on the OPM website no later than September 1, 2007. We are confident that this procedure will ensure that all members

of the public are provided with equal and adequate opportunity to comment regarding the transfer of surplus real property from State ownership.

OPM believes this adequately resolves the issue that prompted Raised Bill No. 5249. Since our plan will provide a methodology by which all members of the public can voice their concerns, OPM believe that this bill is unnecessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with testimony in opposition Raised Bill No. 5249.