



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing – March 19, 2007
Government Administration and Elections Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Gina McCarthy
Department of Environment Protection

**Raised House Bill -7386 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN
PARCELS OF STATE LAND AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised Committee Bill No. 7386.

The Department of Environmental Protection recommends amendment of the proposed bill by eliminating Section 6, which would instruct the DEP to transfer custody and control of a parcel of land located in the town of Griswold known as the Connecticut State Nursery from the Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Natural Resources to the department's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and make the parcel available for active recreational purposes.

The Department is currently finalizing the transfer of the Connecticut State Nursery to the care and control of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES). This particular site has extraordinary potential to support crucial CAES research into the persistent annual appearance of Eastern Equine Encephalitis, a significant threat to public health and safety in southeastern Connecticut. The location adjacent to Doaneville Pond is also ideal for hosting CAES research into invasive aquatic plants. Further, the property's very fertile soils and existing irrigation infrastructure are ideally suited to host the CAES's important research into biofuels derived from soybeans and rapeseed – as well as expansion of its renowned research into Chestnut Blight. CAES has also agreed to work with the DEP to develop a small nursery to raise descendants of the Charter Oak and landscaping stock for use in State Parks.

Transfer of care and control of the entire Connecticut State Forest Nursery site to the CAES will have tremendous benefit to all Connecticut citizens and is the best use of this site's unique characteristics. The DEP understands the Town's desire for additional recreation fields and we are certainly open to working with the Town to explore alternative sites that may be suitable for that purpose.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the DEP's view on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Tom Tyler, the DEP legislative liaison, at 424-3099.