



March 19, 2007

Raised Bill No. 7386: An Act Concerning the Conveyance of Certain Parcels of State Land and Campaign Finance Reform

Testimony of Adam R. Moore, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Honorable Members of the Committee on Government Administration and Elections:

On behalf of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, I am pleased to offer testimony on Sec. 6 of the above-referenced bill. The Association **strongly opposes** this section of the bill, which would transfer the thirty-acre Pachaug Nursery in Griswold from the DEP's Bureau of Natural Resources to the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. The bill would make only four acres of this site available for use by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.

We strongly oppose this plan. Rather, the Association strongly supports a transfer of the entire 30-acre Pachaug Nursery from the Department of Environmental Protection to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. The Pachaug Nursery enjoyed a long tradition of serving all the citizens of Connecticut during its tenure as the State Nursery, and this property's tradition of service to all of the citizens would continue under the stewardship of the Experiment Station.

The Experiment Station proposed to use the site for a variety of scientific and research purposes, all of which serve the broad public interest of our state. The Station would use the Nursery as a base for its research work on eastern equine encephalitis, a fatal, mosquito-borne disease that is most prevalent in southeastern Connecticut. The Station maintains several mosquito traps in this part of the State that it uses to monitor the disease, and the Pachaug Nursery will serve as a much more cost-effective base for this program than the New Haven laboratory.

The Station would also use the fields and plant rearing and storage facilities of the Nursery for agricultural research. The Station is fast becoming a leader in the biofuel and biodiesel sector. Some of the Nursery site could be devoted to the cultivation of plants such as rapeseed that can potentially serve as renewable biofuels.

The Station may also devote some of the thirty acres of the Nursery to the cultivation of plum trees. Though plums may grow well in Connecticut, they are not grown by most Connecticut orchards. The Station's research on plum varieties can help Connecticut orchards, backyard pomologists, and consumers find varieties of plums that are best suited to Connecticut's climate and soils.

The growing fields of the Nursery can also be used to produce blight-resistant American chestnut seedlings. Once the dominant species in our forest, American chestnut has been reduced to shrub status by the introduced, non-native chestnut blight. The Experiment Station, however, has long been working to develop disease-resistant varieties through genetic crossings and studies of hypovirulence.

Finally, the Nursery can serve as a base for the Station's work on aquatic invasive plants.

Using the Pachaug Nursery site for such active recreational purposes as ballfields is not in the best interest of the citizens of Connecticut, especially given the uses that the

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Experiment Station will devote this site to. There are pesticide residues in the Nursery soils, and the proposed uses of the 30 acres of fields for biofuel production and research, for cultivation of plum trees and for the rearing of American chestnut seedlings are incompatible with ballfields and active recreational uses.

We oppose this section of this transfer bill and urge that the Pachaug Nursery be conveyed from the Department of Environmental Protection to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station for the purposes described above.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam R. Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Adam" being particularly prominent.

Adam R. Moore
Executive Director