

TESTIMONY

To: Appropriations Committee

By: **Melissa Spear** on behalf of the **Connecticut Land Conservation Council**

Date: March 27, 2009

Re: Senate Bill 828 Sec 1w: A proposal to take \$12 million in FY10 and FY11 from the Community Investment Act Fund

I am here today on behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council to voice unwavering support for continued investment in Connecticut's quality of life by strongly opposing proposals to divert revenues generated by the Community Investment Act away from the highly effective community programs it currently supports.

Raiding the Community Investment Act would severely impact the State's ability to deliver concrete benefits in communities throughout our Connecticut, benefits that directly improve the quality of life of our state's citizens. CIA funds are being used to create housing we can afford, to help Connecticut farmers continue to produce the food we eat, to conserve the open space in our cities and towns that defines our unique landscapes and provides us with inexpensive recreational opportunities, and to bring our decaying historic assets back into productive use.

In the two and a half years since the CIA was created by the General Assembly the Act has provided funding for over 330 community projects in 130 municipalities. In almost every case CIA funds have been leveraged by matching municipal, federal or private funds bringing millions of additional dollars to bear on these projects.

CIA money is not sitting idle, it is not unproductive excess. It is delivering critical value to the citizens of this state by ensuring that we remain a desirable place to live and work, by improving our ability to compete for both employers and employees in today's difficult economy, by allowing us to invest in critical infrastructure necessary for our state's economy to thrive.

The Community Investment Act is all about growing Connecticut's economy, it is our own effective stimulus package when we need it most! Given the current economic climate, it is critical that we continue to place a high priority on long-term, strategic investments that position us for a sustainable future, and protect our quality of life. This is exactly what the CIA funds do. And let's not forget that jobs are also being created as a result CIA investments. Now is not the time to be shortsighted. We must maintain CIA funding so that we can continue to invest in the future of our state and our communities.

Thank you.