

**Testimony of Patricia Falkenhagen
President Aspetuck Land Trust**

*In Support of H.B. No. 5820, AN ACT CONSERVING NATURAL VEGETATION
NEAR WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES*

Submitted to the Environment Committee February 23, 2009

My name is Patricia Falkenhagen and I live at 336 Silver Hill Rd. in Easton, CT. I am President of the Aspetuck Land Trust, preserving land in Easton, Weston, Fairfield and Westport. We were part of a coalition which helped protect the Aquarion Water Company lands in Fairfield, New Haven and Litchfield Counties, so I am aware of the importance of preserving natural vegetation near wetlands and watercourses.

HB 5820 is extremely important because it protects the quality of Ct's drinking water. Easton and Weston are both towns with huge reservoirs, so protecting the vegetation/forests around these reservoirs has always been a priority for those that live in these towns.

In other communities this bill would help protect against the risks and costs of flooding. But perhaps most significant for those of us actively participating in land trust activities in our area, is the habitat protection these vegetative areas ensure. The importance of protecting nesting sites and other habitats helps make this bill vital to protecting CT's watercourses, rivers and wetlands.

Please pass Bill 5820-it doesn't increase any new regulated areas, but rather increases the level of scrutiny in a minimum area.

Thank you,
Patricia Falkenhagen
President of the Aspetuck Land Trust