



# State of Connecticut

## SENATE

STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**SENATOR EILEEN M. DAILY**  
THIRTY-THIRD DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ROOM 3700  
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591  
CAPITOL: (860) 240-0462  
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-1420  
FAX: (860) 240-0036  
E-MAIL: Daily@senatedems.ct.gov

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March 19, 2010

Senator Slossberg, Representative Spallone, Ranking and esteemed Members of the Government, Administration, and Elections Committee:

I'm Senator Eileen Daily; I've been representing the residents and Town of Haddam in the General Assembly since 1993. I write to encourage your favorable consideration of Raised Bill 5520, An Act Concerning the Conveyance of Certain Parcels of State Land. More specifically, Section 19 of that bill is, I believe, in the best interests of the state, Haddam, and surrounding towns.

That section spells out the transfer of three parcels among three owners with compatible interests. The former Commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Protection, Gina McCarthy, was actively involved in early negotiations and heartily endorsed this conveyance in concept.

In this exchange, if executed, the state would acquire 87.7 acres in the more rural Higganum section of town, contiguous with the Cockaponset State Forest – property previously approved for a subdivision. The DEP would add that parcel to the state forest footprint. The state would also acquire approximately two acres of Connecticut River-front property in East Haddam, just south of where the swing bridge carries Route 82 across.

For its part, the state would surrender a 17.4-acre parcel west of the bridge, west of the railroad right-of-way, and essentially encircling a banquet and conference facility called the Riverhouse. The parcel abuts an existing state Department of Transportation facility immediately to the south in the more densely developed Tylerville section of Haddam – characterized by a fair amount of commercial property.

The other parties in this proposed transaction, the Goodspeed Opera House Foundation (owners of the East Haddam shoreline parcel) and Riverhouse Properties, LLC (owners of the land adjacent to the state forest), would be able to improve the supporting infrastructure for Goodspeed productions on that property.

It must be noted this proposed transaction would not affect the Clark Creek Wildlife Management Area near Eagle Landing State Park on the east bank of the river.

In my view, the benefit to the state is self-evident in terms of an expanded Cockaponset State Forest. More open space for recreation and more habitat for wildlife also contributes to increased water quality protection for existing wells in the Higganum area. Acquisition of the East Haddam parcel is consistent with the DEP's priority to increase public access to and use of the waterfront property.

The benefit to residents of Haddam and the entire region is the prospect of enhanced support facilities for the Goodspeed Opera House, a major component of the local and regional economy. To that point, it cannot be overstated: any and all development in Tylerville would be subject to all local zoning, wetlands, and building regulations, with all those opportunities for public comment and local control.

Again, I urge your approval of this bill and to that end I am very willing to answer any of your follow-up questions. Thank you for your careful deliberation of this matter.

Sincerely,



Eileen M. Daily  
State Senator – 33<sup>rd</sup> District