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I am opposed to HB5520 Sec 19

I am also outraged that open space, paid for by all of us can be traded to two organizations for their own gain.

The 17 acres to be conveyed by the state is part of the Clark Creek Wildlife Management Area that abuts Eagle Landing State Park. Eagle landing provides substantial Connecticut River frontage and deep water access as well as an enormous parking lot. It is the former home of the Camelot Cruise Lines. The 17 acres of land to be conveyed by the state is the ideal compliment to Eagle Landing. Located immediately uphill, it is larger in area and has much greater biodiversity. It has river views and a variety of wildlife, grasses, shrubs, wildflowers and mature trees. Mr. Rocco, representing the Riverhouse, would have you believe that this land has little value as open space. If you remember back to high school and your science class on ecological succession, you would see that the lower portion is in the secondary stages of succession - mainly grasses, shrubs and perennials. Given time, this will eventually progress to softwoods and eventually a mature forest. The upper portion consists of a meadow and a stand of mature maple trees.

At the Board of Selectmen meeting, Mr. Rocco, proposed to trade 54 acres in Haddam that abuts the Cockaponset State Forest. This represents a .3% gain for the state Forest that already has 16,000 acres.

The Goodspeed Foundation is proposing to trade two parcels of land on the CT River, or under it, as the spring freshet often floods it. The 2.5 acre parcel is presently the Opera House parking lot and the .36 acre parcel has a Water Pollution Control Authority Pump House on it.

The Riverhouse and Goodspeed are proposing to use this open space for a hotel, a theater, a train station and numerous retail shops. I am not against development per se, but this property was purchased with the intent to preserve it as open space. How sad to think that land that is sold to the DEP for preservation may not remain so.

In a letter to me, Commissioner Amey Marrella, stated, "The DEP is not the sponsor of this legislation, nor are we supportive of it."

I would hope you would do the right thing and remove Section 19 from HB5520.