

COVENTRY PARKS & RECREATION



1712 Main Street
Coventry, CT 06238
Phone: 860-742-4068
Fax: 860-742-8911

E-mail:
wrubin@coventryct.org

Wendy L. Rubin, CPRP
Director

January 28, 2011

To The Honorable Senator Meyer and members of the Environment Committee:

I support Senate Bill # 831 Liability Protection for Recreational Activities on Open Space Lands. As a professional municipal Director of Recreation currently in the town of Coventry, and previously in Hebron, Colchester and Newington during my professional tenure of over 30 years, I have had the privilege of helping to preserve open space and improve access for the public to enjoy these open spaces for their recreational pursuits.

It is our goal to gain access for residents to community spaces in order to encourage people to be more active, more of the time. Influencing physical activity among self-directed users of public park facilities will further enhance community health.

Anything that can be done to encourage municipalities to provide access to our open spaces, such as this bill will benefit our citizens immensely as our society struggles with obesity, economic challenges and the need to develop coping strategies in our high tech, low touch world. Access to natural areas reduces stress, mitigates obesity and other health issues, connects families and communities, and enhances the quality of life for all.

The current omission of municipalities from liability protection is already beginning to affect important decisions local authorities must make in their role as stewards of our environment. The law should be consistent with that afforded to private landowners and utilities.

On a more personal note, as a resident of East Hampton, Connecticut, I have been able to enjoy the fruits of our labors by taking my family on hikes and bike rides on the Airline Trail State Park. In this economy, having such a great resource close to home that doesn't have an admission fee is truly appreciated. I would hate to see a "Park Closed" sign at the trailhead in the future.

I urge you to pas this bill and help us all in making Connecticut a healthier and more active place to live. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wendy L. Rubin, CPRP
Director of Recreation
Town of Coventry

