

Senator Slossberg, Representative Morrin and members of the committee,

My name is Judson A. Howes I am a resident of the Town of Haddam. I am writing to offer testimony in support of Raised Bill # 1196 Section 14. For the past few years, I have heard the arguments, both for and against the proposed land swap. It is only after listening and considering these differing views that I have decided to offer my support for this section 14 of raised bill #1196.

First, the benefits to the Town of Haddam. The current seventeen acre lot would be developed into a tourist destination. An increase in tourism equals an increase in business and tax revenue for not only Haddam, but East Haddam. Not only from the business (Goodspeed Opera House Foundation and Riverhouse Properties, LLC), but also from the persons employed by such businesses. This increased revenue would not be off set by an increased number of students in the school system as this property would not be a residential development. Furthermore, neither the Town or the State would be responsible for maintenance or improvements as this would now be privately owned business property. As a taxpayer in Haddam, I can only see this as a benefit to help relieve some of the strain put on the taxpayer in the currently economic climate.

Second, the benefits to the State of Connecticut. On its face, the proposed swap is a benefit to the State in that the State would be receiving eighty seven acres of forested property in exchange for seventeen acres of former sand pit property. The seventeen acre parcel, currently owned by the State, is much more in the public eye and currently much more unsightly than the eighty seven acre piece of privately owned property which is offered up for exchange. The pressure and need to upkeep and maintain a property, which directly adjacent to Eagle Landing State Park is far greater than the need to maintain the completely forested eighty seven acre, parcel of property offered in exchange. Furthermore, improvements to the seventeen acre property, at the expense of private businesses, would only help to draw people to use and enjoy the adjacent State property at Eagle Landing. Furthermore, for the State to acquire the eighty seven acre property in Higganum Center, would open up access from Route 81 to parts of Cockaponset State Forest.

Third, the benefits to the environment. The seventeen acre parcel is a former sand pit. There is no real vegetation and wildlife concerns that I am aware of. The properties around this parcel are already zoned commercial and there is, in fact, a vast Department of Transportation facility nearby. The land, in its current state, is unsightly and a total waste. In contrast, the eighty seven acre parcel is beautiful forested area near Higganum Center with access to Route 81 and Cockaponset. Furthermore, it is in close proximity to the Haddam Reservoir. I would

think that it would be a greater benefit to the environment to preserve this parcel in it's natural state than the seventeen acre parcel in it's current state. Again, at no cost to the taxpayer.

Lastly, the benefits to a local businesses. It is my belief that the State should be pursuing avenues to assist business owners in achieving their goals by creating a more "business friendly" atmosphere within the State. This is an opportunity for our elected officials show their support for private business and at no cost to the taxpayer. Support, not only for those directly involved, but for the businesses that are already in existence in the area. They too would benefit for the increase in tourism to the town.

In conclusion, with respect to those of differing opinion, I can see no reason that this bill should not be passed. It would only benefit all those involved in the greater good for the Town, State, environment and local businesses.

Respectfully,

Judson A. Howes

Haddam Resident and taxpayer