

HB 1196

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED BILL 1196 Section 14

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A 2006 Executive order created an Office of Responsible Growth within the Office of Policy and Management whose job it would be "to coordinate state initiatives to control rampant, ill-conceived development that threatens Connecticut's special character."

The Executive Order also required that the "Green Plan" for Connecticut be updated "to better identify sensitive ecological areas and unique features, guide acquisition and preservation efforts..."

I see no better "special character" of Connecticut than the Connecticut River; therefore, I see no better "ill-conceived development that threatens Connecticut's special character" than the land swap proposal currently being forced upon the citizens of the state by Eileen Daily.

I cannot understand how a single Senator has such power as to go against so many directives that have been researched and studied at length and enacted to protect all citizens and state lands.

And to make matters worse, this is the third time this land swap has been brought to the house.

I find this an insulting waste of my tax payer money and the Committee's time.

According to the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) *The Green Plan: Guiding Land Acquisition and Protection in Connecticut* (GP), the DEP's goal is "to acquire or otherwise permanently protect land to meet the diverse needs expressed in Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) section 23-8(b) and in various plans regarding open space protection prepared by the State of Connecticut and our open space partners at a rate consistent with achieving the overall statutory goal of protecting 21% of Connecticut's land area by 2023."

Through this directive the DEP, as stewards of our land, has the task of "negotiating and closing of transactions to ensure that the long-term protection goals are met before desirable properties are converted to other uses." (GP)

The State has been committed to preserving open space for over a century, since 1901. And it has taken it seriously using the very example of the land in question: the seventeen acre parcel in the Tylerville section of Haddam was purchased by the state in 2003 for \$1.3M, to be kept as conservation land as stated in the deed.

The GP further states, "It will take time and adequate funding to meet the statutorily-required land acquisition and protection goals. The DEP is committed to a long-term effort to reach the goals..."

With this "long-term effort" to reach their goals, the State has provided the adequate funding in this case, over a million dollars worth, to acquire land that they found important and significant just eight

years ago. It was purchased as its own parcel and has its own deed, separate from all other parcels that are adjacent to it.

Furthermore the GP states that "The individual landowners interested in protecting their land are perhaps the most critical partners in this effort. Often these individuals have demonstrated a concern for the Connecticut landscape or are otherwise interested in transferring their property for protection purposes. Without them, the Department would be unable to meet the land protection goals set by the legislature."

Therefore, should this land swap be approved, it would jeopardize all future land acquisitions, transfers and purchases for the foreseeable future, contradicting the DEP's very own goal and directive.

This would be a detrimental step backwards and would reverse all of the work and policies that the many departments have put their time, money and energy into creating.

While it remains true that the State would be swapping 17 acres of land for 87 acres, thereby receiving an additional 70 acres that would be added to the thousands of acres of Cockaponset forest, it is my belief that the acquisition of these additional 70 acres would have resonating effects on the conservation of land and cause the DEP and the citizens of Connecticut to lose so much more in **principal**.

In conclusion, I will state the specific goal of the DEP's own GP directive, "In general, land or interests in land under the custody and control of the Department has been obtained to **permanently protect** such property for its conservation, recreation, natural resource or other value. In addition, such land or interests in land has been obtained for the benefit of the public, including future generations. Accordingly, such land or interests in land shall not be exchanged, **except in extenuating circumstances.**"

I oppose the transfer of my land to private developers.

Thank you for your time.

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