

**Town of Chester**  
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**BILL:** SB 1196 Sec. 14

**TITLE:** AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PARCELS OF STATE LAND

**POSITION:** Support

The natural beauty the Lower Connecticut River Valley offers is a treasure not only for the state but for the country. There are however, many pretty places. What makes our end of the state truly special is the quality of life our communities offer; a quality that is a result of our ability to balance recreational, economic, and conservation efforts in overall stewardship of our environment. It is not surprising that 5 of Connecticut's top 9 small towns, as ranked by Connecticut Magazine, can be found along the shores of the lower Connecticut River.

As we continue to navigate some of the most difficult economic times in the state's history, our political leaders talk of improving the state's business climate, and of making tourism a top priority. This proposal is an opportunity to put words into action. The two Goodspeed theatres, the Connecticut River Museum, recreational boating, the Chester Hadlyme Ferry, and most recently, a well received banquet facility have brought visitors to our area. Those visitors shop in our stores, eat in our restaurants, and recently attracted the attention of an aerospace manufacturer who relocated their business and 65 jobs to Chester because of the quality of life the area offered.

The proposed land transfer and associated development will only add to our quality of life. We know agencies are in place that will provide the required oversight. As municipalities we have demonstrated the ability to balance the need for environmental protection and the desire to live, work and recreate in such a special place. The parcels in question will allow an expansion of access for both recreation and economic development. The 80+ acres overlooking the river will be enjoyed by who visit our state forests. The possibility of appropriately scaled development will provide synergistic benefit to the business and residential community of all the surrounding towns.

For these reasons, as First Selectman of Chester, Haddam's neighbor to the south, I strongly support the proposed transfer.

Thomas E. Marsh

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Marsh", is written over a horizontal line.

First Selectman, Chester