

March 24, 2011

To: Government Administration and Elections Committee

Re: Raised Senate Bill No. 1196 Opposed

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PARCELS OF
STATE LAND

Dear Sen. Slossberg, Rep. Morin and members of the Committee,

My name is Jacqueline Talbot, and as the Lower River Steward, I am submitting comments on behalf of the Connecticut River Watershed Council. The Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC) joins the voices of other concerned groups and residents who oppose the inclusion of Section 14 of SB No. 1196.

The Connecticut River Watershed Council is a nonprofit membership organization that has been advocating for the protection and sustainable use of the entire 11,000 square-mile, four-state Connecticut River watershed since 1952. We see the protection of natural resources and the upholding of conservation intentions as critical to the State's competitive ability and economic sustainability.

We believe the original intention for the 17 acre parcel in question is clearly stated in the deed, and, as are many others, we are incredibly concerned and troubled that the legislature is considering transferring, for development purposes, land intended to "*be retained in its natural scenic or open condition as park or public open space.*" We feel this would 1) truly undermine the DEP who purchased the 17 acre parcel near the Connecticut River for \$1.35 million and 2) set a very unsettling precedent, whereby landowners would be discouraged from feeling confident that their conservation intentions for their land would be respected and whereby developers, seeing an opening of the door, would be able to seize on this example when interested in other beautiful State-owned land. It also makes us uncomfortable that Riverhouse's plans for this land have only been vaguely outlined and feel the aforementioned dangerous precedent combined with this lack of specificity makes it very understandable why the conservation community would be particularly troubled.

We are in agreement with many of the groups and individuals who expressed dismay about this proposed swap, and specifically feel that the statement submitted by J. H. Torrance Downes, who is a Senior Planner at the CT River Estuary Regional Planning Agency, a staff member for the CT River Gateway Commission and one of a number of individuals who have truly been at the table to try to collaborate upon a workable solution, represents an articulate outline of the delicacy of the situation as well as sound reasons why this swap, complete with unanswered questions, is premature at best. We encourage you to

recognize the legitimacy of the concerns expressed by all and ask that you oppose Section 14 of Bill 1196.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our opinions.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Talbot
Lower River Steward

Iron rusts from disuse; water loses its purity from stagnation...even so does inaction sap the vigor of the mind.
~Leonardo da Vinci