



## New England Mountain Bike Association

**RE: Comments Supporting HB 6557, a bill that would protect municipalities that 1) offer free access to their recreational lands, and 2) take reasonable precautions to ensure that recreational areas are safe.**

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

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Testimony to the Judiciary  
Committee Delivered  
by

Al Tinti

Connecticut Chapter  
New England Mountain Bike  
Association

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Thank you for allowing the New England Mountain Bike Association to present testimony in support of HB 6557.

Nearly 350,000 Connecticut residents mountain bike on natural surface, singletrack trails<sup>1</sup>, and the Connecticut Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) represents their interests. Our organization has a wide range of programs designed to promote stewardship of public trails and healthy recreation for residents of all ages.

NEMBA strongly urges the committee to support HB 6557. Protecting municipalities from frivolous lawsuits is critical to the economic and physical health of our communities. Municipalities should not be penalized for providing opportunities for healthy recreation: they simply cannot afford to be dragged into court because they have opened up public property to recreation. Similarly, our communities can not afford the consequences of not having outdoor, natural places to run, walk, and bicycle. HB 6557 is important in helping to make our communities healthier and more livable.

in this modern era of dwindling open space, our communities are experiencing rampant obesity among old and young alike, and a widespread disconnect to the natural world, commonly referred to as nature deficit disorder. Municipal lands play an ever increasing role in providing recreational opportunities to our citizenry, and outdoor recreation such as mountain biking plays a significant role in combating these social problems.

This legislation will play a positive role in helping to promote healthy outdoor recreation, help Connecticut's municipalities and their struggling budgets, and restore basic justice to the Recreational Use Statutes in our state.

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<sup>1</sup> Outdoor Recreation Participation Study (Leisure Trends Group for the Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2004)

**Support for NEMBA's Testimony comes from over 150 residents of Connecticut and a few others from out of state who could not attend the Judiciary Committee's public hearing on HB 6557. Many of these individuals wish for NEMBA to include their own testimony to this Committee and have signed on to NEMBA's testimony in favor of HB 6557.**

Kyaiera Mistretta-Tucker  
Darien CT

As a resident of Lower Fairfield County, I believe access to municipal lands is vital to residents' happiness and mental health. Many in my area depend upon recreation on municipal lands for their physical and mental health. For many people who spend their days working indoors and surrounded by technology, recreation on municipal lands is a vital outlet and escape from modern world. The farther a person moves away from nature, the farther they move from humanity.

Brian Campanelli  
Southington CT

In such a small state as Connecticut any reduction in open space is a huge loss to the community. Most of my outdoor life is spent on trails be it biking or hiking. No company or municipality should have to worry that users will cost them money.

Robert Berry  
Glastonbury CT

Hello. My name is Robert Berry, from Glastonbury, CT. I support HB 6557 not only because I am a mountain biker and occasional hiker, but also because I am a clinical exercise physiologist. Clinical exercise physiologists work with patients who have chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia. All of these conditions respond favorably to increased physical activity, i.e. exercise. I am often asked what the best kind of exercise is, and I always answer, "The one that you'll do." The more opportunities that you have to engage in physical activities, the more likely it is that you will find one that you enjoy and will continue to practice.

In an era where our health care system is failing under the crushing burden of chronic

disease, it is imperative that more opportunities be made available for people to easily incorporate physical activity into their lives. If someone has to travel long distances to engage in physical activity, the odds of them successfully integrating that behavior into their lifestyle are drastically reduced. The role of government should be to find ways to make physical activity more accessible to people, not less so. Supporting HB 6557 will help ensure that Connecticut residents have access to these opportunities for physical activities.

Sincerely,  
Robert Berry  
Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist  
Fellow, American Association of  
Cardiovascular and Pulmonary

Tim Murphy  
East Hampton CT

I am a resident of East Hampton, CT, and enjoy getting out in the woods for hiking, biking and cross country skiing. What I have seen over the past 20 years in East Hampton is a major loss of forested land due to the creation of new housing developments. With the loss of the private land for recreation opportunities throughout Connecticut, it becomes more important for municipalities to be able to fill this void. Therefore I urge the committee to support HB 6557.

David L. Metzger  
Bloomfield CT

I am David L. Metzger. I live at 22 Jerome Avenue, Bloomfield CT, 06002. I am a lawyer. I believe entities and individuals who permit people to come onto their land for recreational purposes should not be subject to lawsuits by those who have enjoyed the use of the land for recreation. I am especially concerned about areas that have trails or where trails cross private land, as it is important to the survival of long

established trails that private land owners, including the MDC, municipalities and other governmental entities, continue to permit trail use.

John Haug  
Branford CT

I ride municipal or state lands 100% of the time. I support legislative efforts such as this so citizens can continue to have access to multi use lands for recreational purposes. Hiking, running, and riding are low impact on the environment and beneficial to people for both the interaction with nature and for healthy exercise. The state and municipalities should be protected from frivolous lawsuits.

Dan Surkis  
Farmington CT

Protecting our resources and quality of life is win-win. Thanks for listening.

Chris Ragali  
Bristol CT

I am in full support of NEMBA's testimony regarding HB 6557. We need to do what we can to help protect municipalities from frivolous lawsuits so that we can all continue to enjoy the great outdoors

Art Roti  
Granby CT

With all the challenges we face today it is important that all forms of outdoor recreation be supported. Mountain biking is a popular and healthy way to see the outdoors. Children love the idea of being able to ride their bikes and walk in the woods where there are no cars to avoid. Furthermore, families can also enjoy these activities. Finally, I find mountain biking a great way to alleviate stress so it is very important to me that lands remain open to these activity. I support this bill to give immunity to municipalities.

Paul Sarazin  
North Windham CT

As a member of NEMBA and the mountain bike community it is essential that the trails remain open for public use. The unfortunate incident in West Hartford should be used as an example on how the public sector and the MDC can now. Move forward together and be mutually protected against frivolous

law suits. Many mountain bikers maintain and police the

Trails they use which is a benefit to the MDC. It would be a crime to eliminate an area that helps keep Americans fit and healthy.

Frank M. Strazar  
Wilton CT

Protecting municipalities that allow for recreation is important to me because they offer a breath of fresh air, relaxation and stimulation through all forms of physicality, while also providing emotional tranquility and community awareness. It is imperative that the committee support HB 6557 in order to maintain the opportunities these resources provide to us as individuals and to our public en masse.

Jonathan Yeich  
South Windsor CT

I believe it is important for municipalities that allow for recreation to be extended liability protections and be protected from frivolous lawsuits.

Mark Lurie  
Newtown CT

I feel this legislation is not only important for mountain biking but also very important for anyone wanting to do any sort of physical activity on public lands. Towns should not be held liable for frivolous law suits who allow the public to recreate on their land. Otherwise it will create an environment where there will be where for people to enjoy the outdoors and get exercise.

Eric Schonenberg  
New Fairfield CT

I support protecting municipalities from frivolous liability when allowing recreation. Isn't it obvious? We need more recreation in this country. Obesity, kids inside too much. Let's move in the direction of more recreational opportunities.

Rich Coffey  
Stamford CT

My Name is Rich Coffey and I live in Stamford, CT. My son and I have been mountain biking for 6 or 7 years and are passionate about the sport. Not only has biking in the parks given us both a greater

appreciation of the incredible beauty of our state's rivers and forests but it has also instilled a fine-tuned awareness of the cycles of nature and the sensitivity of the environment. Having the opportunity for this type of "immersive" recreation has actually been a key factor in my son's choice of career -- environmental science!

Supporting this bill is extremely important to us as everyone's access to municipal lands is critical to the economic, mental and physical health of our communities. I see firsthand the joy in both old and young alike of folks hiking, biking, and fishing as they reconnect to the natural world.

Protecting municipalities from frivolous lawsuits is critical -- they simply cannot afford to be dragged into court because they have opened up public property to recreation. Municipalities should not be penalized for providing opportunities for healthy recreation: they should be encouraged and rewarded for promoting outdoor, natural places to run, walk, and bicycle.

HB 6557 is important in helping to make our communities healthier and more livable and help Connecticut's municipalities restore basic justice to the Recreational Use Statutes in our state.

James Smith  
Ledyard CT

As a recreational rider I use various state and local town areas for riding. I find it appalling that people who ride bikes in general Mountain Biking will try to gain by suing a town or municipality due to their own negligence. The minute you get on a bike you are riding at your own risk. Having broke my neck while riding on State property I would have never thought to take action against the state. I decided to ride the bike I took the risk and that is my responsibility. Do not let people take action against the state or local towns.

Michele Stryeski  
Bristol CT

I am in support of this bill because it will able a harmonious balance between municipalities and the riding community. The cycling community is passionate. We love to

be outdoors, we love our sport. We are trying to live a healthy lifestyle, and we have limited places to ride. As more communities are being developed, are trail system is dwindling.

Today there is tension between municipalities and the riding community. Let's face it, we all know that there is a litigious public, and the municipalities should not be liable for our actions. Mountain biking is a sport that contains an element of risk; we should be able to take that risk on our hands and make responsible decisions. If we are not careful and hit that tree, or fall off a rock, or crash into a gate we should take ownership. It is not a town's fault that the rock was larger than we anticipated and the proper skill set was not present.

Municipalities preside over many miles of beautiful single track. If they are held responsible for our actions, I do not blame them for discouraging or prohibiting any riding. But let's close that loophole, let riders act as responsible adults and please keep the trails open to public use without the consistent fear of when the next lawsuit will arise.

I support house bill 6657, because it will allow me to continue my healthy, active outdoor lifestyle.

Ryan Tucker  
Darien CT

I support the HB 6557 legislation. Protecting municipalities from frivolous lawsuits is critical to the economic and physical health of our communities. Municipalities should not be penalized for providing opportunities for healthy recreation: they simply cannot afford to be dragged into court because they have opened up public property to recreation. Similarly, our communities can not afford the consequences of not having outdoor, natural places to run, walk, and bicycle. HB 6557 is important in helping to make our communities healthier and more livable.

Rick Brodsky  
Newtown CT

Public land needs to be protected from frivolous lawsuits. Please help protect the public's ability to access these wonderful

natural resources. The government should not be held liable for frivolous lawsuits.

Peter Gill  
Conway, MA

While I am not a resident of the State of CT, I believe this is an important topic. In supporting HB 6557 the committee will help protect communities in CT from frivolous lawsuits that might come out of recreational activities on public property. In supporting this bill committee members will also send a message to cities and towns in other states that face similar situations.

Scott Oberg  
Meriden CT

My name is Scott Oberg. I have lived in CT all my life and currently live in Meriden. I am an avid mountain biker and outdoor enthusiast and I am supporting NEMBA with their efforts in supporting HB 6557.

Alan Feldman  
Sharon MA

I believe mountain biking or any action sport is inherently dangerous and done so at "your own risk". I do not believe municipalities that allow biking or skating or any sport on their land should be held liable. Much like surfing, you can't sue a town for allowing surfing on its beaches if you're hurt as far as I know. I don't want to open a can of worms here but I value my right to bike in public forests that allow it and believe it is at my own risk if something bad happens.

George Bussmann  
Branford CT

I support NEMBA's testimony regarding mountain biking on municipal property because to limit recreational activities on municipal property would greatly reduce the places, hikers, bikers, walkers etc., could enjoy the out of doors in this state.

Tim Hopkins  
Simsbury CT

I live in Simsbury Connecticut and am an avid mountain biker. The lands such as the West Hartford Reservoir are a vital resource for this important recreation. To hold the water commission or other public services liable for accidents incurred through pursuit of this recreational activity on "public lands" will be a huge loss for the community.

Alan Tinti  
Glastonbury CT

As a NEMBA and CFPA member and a Glastonbury resident, I strongly support NEMBA's testimony on behalf of passage of HB6557, "AN ACT CONCERNING LIABILITY FOR THE RECREATIONAL USE OF LANDS".

Don Heckler Jr.  
Berlin CT

As an avid mountain biker, I am in favor of extending liability protections to municipalities that allow for free and public recreation. I am definitely in support of HB 6557.

Alexander Sokolow  
Killingworth CT

Now more than ever obesity is a problem in the United States. Health care costs continue to rise. Taking away or hindering recreational opportunities by punishing those that open their land to public use does not help the cause. I urge the committee to support HB 6557 and support the greater good.

Todd A. Simonds  
Colchester CT

I support any legislation that would indemnify landowners (whether public or private) who allow recreational use of their land. Many recreational activities including hiking, biking, and rock climbing have inherent risks, and those who participate in these activities are well aware of the risks. Managing these risks and dealing with the consequences of any unfortunate events should be a matter of personal responsibility.

Marc Dupuis  
Danielson CT

I would like to show my support for NEMBA's testimony (below). I firmly believe that the litigation should not be directed at, or the responsibility of, the municipalities and the more access we have to our public lands, the better off we all will be.

Laura Leigh Caissy  
Fairfield CT

Mountain biking and hiking is a healthy passion which I have embraced in my

midlife. Without it I feel I would be depressed and would reconsider residency in Ct. My husband and I would most likely move if the option to enjoy these freedoms did not exist.

Dan Cassella  
Wallingford CT

It's my hope people don't look at public municipalities as just another pay day and will see them for what they are, a way to enjoy the outdoors with family and friends in a healthy way.

Derek Monahan  
Bristol CT

I support NEMBA, CFPA and all organizations advocating HB 6557, An Act Concerning Liability for the Recreational Use of Land. In this age there are few things we need more than physical fitness, and there are thousands in CT who take great happiness in getting their exercise in the natural environment provides by our great state's forests and mountains. Mountain biking, hiking, running: these are just a few examples of the activities many of us can enjoy practically in our own backyards. We don't need millions of dollars to build parks, buildings or buy equipment. All we need is to be able to use what is already here. Please ensure our continued freedom to enjoy the woodlands of our home by protecting the landowners who make them available to us. Thank you.

Tom Carruthers  
Bethel CT

I, Tom Carruthers at 7 Vera Drive in Bethel CT support this testimony. Mountain Biking is a life sport enjoyed by millions of Americans and it's how we help maintain our weight and healthy life styles to avoid obesity and cardiovascular disease. It is also how we maintain healthy minds. By restricting trail access you limit the number of opportunities. The majority of Mountain Bikers are respectful individuals who care about the wear and care of the trails they use and take responsibility for their actions. I applaud you in advance by voting for open access and to not close down trails. Thank you for listening.

Scott Birmingham  
East Granby CT

My name is Scott Birmingham of East Granby, CT I am in support of the bill to reduce the liability to municipalities so that they will allow access to recreational activities such as mountain biking without fear of frivolous lawsuits such as the extremely publicized suit involving MDC at the West Hartford Reservoir on RT.4. This not only hurts the towns financially but also reduces the space for which people who are involved or would become involved in healthy activity reduced space and opportunity to pursue those physical outlets. Please support HB 6557.

Ed Perten  
Milford CT

As a NEMBA member, I strongly support their support of HB 6557. Use of public recreation facilities is extremely important to both individuals and the greater community at large. NEMBA has taken responsibility to build and maintain sustainable trails for the public to enjoy. This helps to relieve stress, to maintain physical fitness, to develop a sense of camaraderie and a sense of community. It would be a shame to lose this by not having places to ride due to concerns about liability. I strongly urge you to keep public facilities open to the public to use for their mountain biking and other recreation interests. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Diana Petersen  
Middletown CT

I support NEMBA's testimony. I am an avid cyclist and hiker. It is very important for individual's to have access to outdoor open spaces, forests and parks to help maintain their health and to be an example for the younger population.

John Lockwood  
West Simsbury

My name is John Lockwood. I reside at 15 Homestead Road in West Simsbury, CT. I am an avid cyclist, hiker, snowshoer, and nature photographer. I am a member of the New England Mountain Biking Association (NEMBA), the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA), and the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). In fact, the LAB recently named Simsbury to their list of

Bicycle Friendly Communities, the first town in Connecticut to ever receive this designation.

I am writing to strongly urge the Committee to support HB6557 in order to reinstate municipal liability protection for activities on recreational facilities. Failure to pass such legislation will lead to municipalities and non-profit municipal corporations throughout Connecticut to reexamine their public access policies in light of the Conway v. Wilton court decision, and the recent Superior Court decision involving the Metropolitan District Commission property in West Hartford.

Connecticut is a beautiful, but heavily populated state. While the state is encouraging (and funding) municipalities to acquire open space, it would be senseless not to give the towns some protection from legal liability for the public's use of such land. Municipal lands play an important role in providing recreational activities for the residents of Connecticut.

In addition to supporting this bill, I would urge the Committee to ensure that "bicycling" and "mountain biking" continue to be included among the recreational activities to be covered. Through the work of organizations like NEMBA and IMBA, mountain bikers have become active and important stewards of our wilderness trails. These groups have provided thousands of hours of volunteer time in CT to build, maintain and repair trails in an environmentally responsible manner. In addition, these groups provide programs and materials to educate all trail users on how to act responsibly and preserve the open spaces we all use.

Again, I urge the Committee to support these bills. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Bob Baltek  
East Haddam CT

I support this bill 100% as it is absolutely essential to relieve public entities from the burden of this liability, which really only benefits lawyers and insurance providers who want to make money on the threat of costly litigation.

Allyson Shimizu  
Seymour CT

Protecting municipalities that allow for recreation is important because it allows for physical activities that are healthful and also affordable. I cannot pay for a gym but I can always afford to go for a walk or bike ride!

William Higgins  
Enfield CT

I am one of over the 300,000 Connecticut residents who mountain bike on natural surface and singletrack trails responsibly. I am also a member of the Connecticut Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA). I along with NEMBA strongly urge the committee to support HB 6557. This Bill protects municipalities from frivolous lawsuits.

Steven McAllister  
Stratford CT

I am an avid trail enthusiast and trail maintainer. Activities include hiking, snowshoeing and mountain biking, etc. I endorse NEMBA's efforts regarding HB 6557.

Jon Petersen  
Middletown CT

I support NEMBA's testimony. Something really needs to be done to protect municipalities from frivolous lawsuits. The recent award to the bicyclist who was injured at West Hartford Reservoir is just wrong. It sets a precedent to open up lawsuits on most of the trails we ride on. And once that happens, they will close these trails for recreational use.

Its about time people start being responsible for their own actions. Just because you get hurt, this does not give you the right to sue for no reason.  
Close the loopholes!

Elizabeth Krajewski  
Coventry CT

I strongly support NEMBA's testimony to support HB 6557 and protecting municipalities from frivolous lawsuits.

Stefan Heline  
Hebron CT

As an avid and responsible mountain bike enthusiast, I support the NEMBA testimony allowing the recreational use of public lands without the need to subject municipalities to additional liability. Those of us who choose to participate in these recreational activities understand the hazards and risks and accept them as is. Responsible mountain bikers use common sense and judgment when participating in the sport. Thank you for your consideration.

Mark Toce  
Plainville CT

I'm happy to hear that HB 6557 will specifically include bicycling as part of the definition of public recreation. As this is my primary form of outdoor recreation, I would be extremely disappointed to lose access to State and municipal lands. I fully support NEMBA's position on this bill.

Robert Caporaso  
Griswold CT

Frivolous lawsuits are making our communities struggle to support healthy outdoor activities in our state. Please support HB 6557

Bill Kelly  
Vernon CT

It is important to keep these trails open not just for us adults but also for the kids growing up. It is a great family recreation and if we take it away it is one more notch in chopping down the family values tree and gives kids and teens more time to get into mischief!

Jesse Gannelli  
Tolland CT

I believe land that is owned/purchased with tax dollars that the public pays should be open for the people to use for recreation.

Michael Francoeur  
West Hartford CT

My name is Michael Francoeur, and I live in West Hartford, CT – and I support NEMBA's testimony. The reservoir is one of West Hartford's best resources for its residents and the residents of surrounding areas, and is used for recreation by countless individuals – walking, running, and biking, and not allowing these activities would be a travesty.

Simon Garstin  
Vancouver BC

My name is Simon Garstin, Age 20, and I live on Vancouver Island (west coast of Canada). The reason I am emailing is because I do feel strongly about allowing and encouraging outdoor recreation of all forms due to its socio-economic benefits (they are endless and many many paragraphs could be written on the subject). To have access denied to ride your bike on land because someone is suing the landowner is incredibly wrong on so many levels.

Fabian Esponda  
North Haven CT

Municipalities must be afforded protection from lawsuits! We need places to ride, protect these organizations from lawsuits resulting from people recreating on their property!

Tuiri Rostad  
Norfolk CT

I'm all for ending frivolous lawsuits of any nature. Life comes at you fast and there are no promises.

Amy Frey  
West Hartford, CT

Using lands such as the reservoirs is a privilege and we need to take responsibility for our own actions. We need to, as citizens, exercise good judgment and not hold others responsible for our own mistakes. Endorsing this case would mean that every time someone hurts themselves in a public space, the threat of a suit hangs over a community or public resource, and our ever-more litigious society will become even more-so.

Vianna Zimbe  
Glastonbury CT

Please continue to allow cyclists and mountain bikers access to the public lands in Connecticut. The opportunity to get out for exercise and fresh air is priceless. I live in a suburban area and the Manchester Water / Case Mountain and Gay City State park are two of many favorite places to escape into the peace of the woods and to hone my mountain biking skills.

Philip Parker  
Manchester, CT  
I love hiking and biking on municipal lands!

Russell Kelly  
Somers CT  
My family and I are avid recreationalist enjoying public lands on foot, horseback, mtn bike and skis. It is important to me to have access to the many properties made available by municipalities. It saddens me to see this resource threatened by frivolous lawsuits and I support legislation that will extend protections to those municipalities from such lawsuits. I am in support of HB 6557.

Cathy Rubin & Jim Levola  
Voluntown CT  
People who use the outdoors, no matter whose property it is, should be responsible for their own actions and not expect others to pay them compensation for their ignorance and negligence.

John Laughran  
Windsor CT  
I've had the benefit of hiking and biking on municipal properties that would not have been available if they were closed to the public. Please support the protections.

Jamie Mastro,  
Formerly of Wethersfield  
Seasonally of Old Lyme.  
Wilbraham MA  
Please do something about this and other frivolous lawsuits. I think the award is excessive and should have been thrown out of court. If nothing else, please pass legislation to limit the amount of awards... It is one thing to pay someone's medical bills, it's another to make them rich for a mistake that they made! Where is the personal accountability??

Walter Beach  
West Suffield CT  
I grew up in West Hartford during the 70's and early 80's. I have fond memories of my father taking me for long walks on the many trails in the West Hartford Reservoir. I would hate to see it closed to the public because of one unfortunate accident. From what I've seen in the media and read online this accident was the result of the riders

carelessness not neglect or anything else that could be attributed to the MDC. When are we going to stop blaming others for our own mistakes? While I hope the person who was injured makes a full recovery I fail to see how and why she was awarded such a large sum of money.

David Harkins  
Longmeadow, MA  
I like to go biking on the public trails and particularly enjoy the trails on the MDC property.

Dan O'Neill  
Kent CT  
I am a biker, and a life-long citizen of CT... and I vote. It is my wish to protect the limited spaces we have to ride on and to increase the miles, both on and off road, that we can freely use. As a biker I respect these spaces and take full responsibility for my riding; the owners (including municipalities) of the lands on which I ride owe me nothing--in fact, I owe them my respect and gratitude. It is really that simple. Politicians and civic leaders who support the same issues I do will always have my support; those who do not are on their own.

Stephanie Zoltewicz  
Manchester CT  
I support the legislation because I am an avid mountain biker and enjoy the trails here in CT and want to continue to do so for many more years!

Alfred Caputo  
West Hartland CT  
I support NEMBA's testimony because I believe we should be individually responsible for our own actions, and their outcomes.

Judy Chirico  
Stafford Springs CT  
I support NEMBA's testimony. I support extending liability to towns and municipalities who allow mountain biking on public property. There is limited open space for mountain biking and it is a wonderful means for staying in shape and promoting good health.

Jeffery Winnick  
Simsbury CT

People need to take responsibility for their own actions. Riding is not unlike driving you need to follow rules of the recreational area as you do on the road in your car. Riding distracted is the same as driving distracted, and both have their consequences.

Karen Kaminski  
South Windsor CT

I am a mountain bike rider that uses public land trails. They are important to myself and my family as a way to enjoy the outdoors and get much needed exercise. Humans were not meant to be sedentary. Nature is important to our health and well being. I hope we can continue to use and have access to these public lands and that our children will be just as privileged.

Clifford Kenyon  
Manchester CT

As someone who owns a home in Manchester which abuts a recreation area used for mountain biking, I support this bill which will extend protections to municipalities that allow for public recreation.

Cara DeFrancesco  
Bridgeport CT

I support NEMBA because I know the majority of us (mountain bikers) out there take care of the properties we ride on (trail maintenance, making sure we do not litter, etc.) and also understand the nature of our sport - sometimes, the bike doesn't always remain under us and it has nothing to do with who owns the land! It would be a tremendous shame to lose access to the lands we ride on. There is nothing more exhilarating or joyful as riding a mountain bike through a beautiful section of woods, along a river, away from the sound of vehicles.

Scott Kluger  
West Hartford CT

Unfortunately, I cannot attend the hearing, but want to give NEMBA my full support during this time. I believe as long as warning signs are posted in recreational areas about riding at one's own risk, or not riding in certain areas of the park, a

municipality should have absolutely no liability.

Thomas J Rasmussen  
Weatogue CT

I used to be a hot shot punk in my youth, abusing alcohol and cigarettes until I found a MT Bike. Thirty five years later (at 68 years young) my bike is keeping me out of trouble and healthy. No smokes or booze. Please do not limit places I can enjoy this sport. Thank you.

Angel Johnstone  
Manchester CT

Please do not allow a frivolous lawsuit (or your fear of one), degrade the freedoms of your citizens to use the few remaining spots of nature to renew their minds, bodies and spirits.

Kris Kline  
Ellington CT

It is time people are responsible for their own actions. We need to close the loopholes that allow this "golden ticket lawsuit" mentality.

Gina L. Block  
Higganum CT

As someone who grew up exploring the woods of Connecticut, I think the loss of the MDC property at the West Hartford Reservoir would be an absolute travesty. This great trail network is home to thousands of walkers, hikers, and bikers in the state. We should be fostering healthy, active lifestyles- both in children and adults across Connecticut. Taking away such valuable public spaces detrimental to active communities. It is a shame that this is even up for debate. I hope to continue using these trails... and perhaps someday my children will be able to enjoy them as well.

Bob Forster  
Wilton CT

Mountain biking trails are an important recreational resource for the state. People have to be responsible for their own actions and judgment not the towns that open their resources to the public

Anthony Conti  
Glastonbury CT

If people and/or organizations are nice

enough to share their land; we should respect that and not hold them accountable for mistakes made by the receivers of the land owner's generosity

Jeff A. Murray  
Rocky Hill CT

It's a shame that thousands of people would lose the access to recreation areas due to one person's negligence and a current law that does not protect municipalities. I support bill HB 6557 which will allow people to enjoy the outdoors while at the same time close the current loophole in the law and give immunity to landowners.

Eric Bischof  
West Hartford CT

I'm writing in support of the current proposed legislation to protect municipalities who make their land available for public use. My family uses the trails around the West Hartford Reservoir area for walking and running on an almost weekly basis during the summer. I would really hate to see this great recreational area be closed to public use. Access to this land is a huge asset to those of us who live in West Hartford and enjoy the way of life that this town has to offer. I wish they would make MORE of it available!

People--and kids especially--need access to areas like the MDC's Reservoir so that there are alternatives to the sedentary lifestyle that more and more Americans are engaging in.

Ryan O'Hara  
Vernon CT

I believe it is important of our next generation of children to be able to play in

the woods on their bicycles. It is healthy and fun. Without having space that is permitted for people to do so would be tragic.

Larry Settembrini  
Trumbull, CT

We need to protect our land access and take responsibilities for our actions while participating in outdoor activities. A frivolous lawsuit should not put the entire outdoor community at risk for access. It is too important to our well being, our families and our futures. We need access to the land and we have to respect the landowners who have generously allowed us access to their property.

John Arch  
Coventry CT

I John Arch from Coventry Ct. believe it is critical to protect municipalities from liability pertaining to recreational activities on properties where permission has been granted in good faith and where it is understood that this is a privilege and not a right. The laws as they are currently written are in my opinion are an open invitation to frivolous law suits and will eventually close access to valuable resources available to the surrounding community that enhance our quality of life.

Larry Wright  
East Hartford CT

We use the East Coast Greenway bike trail, Case mountain trails and the rails to trails between Manchester, Ellington and Bolton quite a bit. I would hate to see these have to close due to a single incident. I support this new legislation!

### **The following individuals have signed on to NEMBA's Testimony:**

William Gombos  
Middletown CT

Paula Burton  
Sandy Hook CT

Bryan McFarland  
Deep River CT

Glenn F. Vernes

Middletown CT

Peter Westerholm  
Wilton CT

Scott Byrne  
New Hartford CT

David Stowe  
Amston CT

Joanna Brooks  
Shelton CT

Robert S. Mazzawy  
S. Glastonbury CT

Colin Michael McAdoo  
Lake Oswego OR

Joshualne Toth Southbury CT	Claudia Spaulding Cheshire CT	Linda Gannelli Tolland CT
Justin and Jessica Olewnik Farmington CT	Jason Effand Windsor CT	Mark DiPoppo Windsor Locks CT
Richard Sequeira Fairfield CT	James Brick Southington CT	Jaime J. Rotatori- Trajcevski West Hartford CT
Jonathan Kleinberg Manchester CT	Jay Krajewski Coventry CT	Evan West Bozeman MT
Doug Shuckra Unionville CT	Mark Higby Granby CT	Dean Romine Bozeman MT
Ell Miner Pawcatuck CT	Jackj Fleming Kennebunkport ME	Joshualne Toth Southbury CT
Guy Somers Shelton CT	Barry Spaulding Cheshire CT 06410	Alison Hall Tolland, CT
Robert Wheeler Bloomfield CT	Chris LaSalle Wallingford, CT	Ron Michaels Orange CT
Steve Koller Plainville CT	Jonas Ciemny Groton MA	Nick Hage Cycling Sports Group Bethel CT
Daren Casey Plainville CT	Damien Drobinski Hamden CT	Judy Strom Danbury CT
Steve Tudisco Hartford CT	Eric VanOstrand Amston CT	Melissa Dewey Hartford CT
Dr. Andrew J. Kuhlberg Canton CT	Mary Pelletier Manchester CT	Mary Lynn Gemma Hadix Vernon CT
Alfred g. Hgley Farmington CT	Neil Montlick Windsor CT	Frank Sousa West Hartford CT
Josh Gianni Torrington CT	Bob Spooner East Hampton CT	Harley Erickson Willimantic CT
Kevin McCormick Bristol CT	Brian Towles Easthampton MA	William Lakel Woodbury CT
Shawn Craver Willington CT	Jennifer Dickinson East Glastonbury CT	Ed Blasco Danbury CT
Jim Marinelli Torrington,CT	Jeffrey Zweig West Hartford CT	Charlene Smith Bolton CT
Ray Foss Lisbon CT	Conrad Peters Glastonbury CT	Wesley Pomeroy Jr. Watertown CT