

**Testimonies in support of H.B. 6557 submitted on behalf of Susan Masino (Chair, Safe Routes to School Committee, Tootin' Hills) and Joan Hill (Columbia, CT Open Space Committee)**

To the Judiciary Committee:

As the Chair of the Safe Routes to School Committee at Tootin' Hills School in West Simsbury, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of this initiative.

We have been working on a comprehensive program to encourage children to walk or bike to school – it involves surveys, maps, education and outreach - and town land is an essential part throughout this network. Small easements and major parcels provide access and trails that dramatically reduce the distance to school. Otherwise, buses are the only option – even for children within less than a mile radius from school.

Besides getting to school, these critical town land puzzle pieces help kids get off busy roads (we have NO sidewalks in our school district). They can use this network to go to friends' houses, get to Stratton Brook Park, and link to other major recreational trails such as the Rails-to-Trails network and ultimately the East Coast Greenway.

People are horrified when they realize that this glitch in the law has not been resolved yet, and will be delighted to learn that it is finally taken care of this year. Thank you for your support.

Susan Masino, Chair  
Safe Routes to School Committee  
Tootin' Hills School  
West Simsbury

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Dear Judiciary Committee:

As a member of the Columbia Connecticut Open Space Committee, I would like to speak in favor of this legislation to provide the same liability protection to municipalities as is currently afforded private landowners who open their lands to recreational use at no fee.

Our town is increasingly reluctant to take on the responsibility of Open Space due to fears over liability. Only recently has our town even considered protecting land for future generations to enjoy. Please help to keep our municipal lands open and growing, by passing this legislation.

Joan Hill  
23 Cards Mill Rd.  
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