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Good morning Chairman Coleman, Chairman Fox, members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Tim Linehan. I chair the Connecticut chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. On behalf of the chapter's 8,000 members I'm here to speak in support of:

<b>Proposed Bill</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Position</b>
H.B. 6557	An Act Concerning Liability For The Recreational Use Of Lands	Support

We encourage the legislature to extend to municipal landowners the same limited liability protections that are available to the State and to private landowners.

During the past year CT-AMC volunteers led over 1,100 hikes, backpacks, cross country ski trips, flat water and white water paddles, bike rides, rock and ice climbs, trail maintenance work parties, river clean-ups, and a variety of seminars on conservation and environmental initiatives. Continued access to the natural resources that are located on municipal land is crucial to maintaining the number and variety of activities that our chapter offers to the residents of Connecticut.

The potential for liability concerns to result in the closure of municipal properties to recreation is not speculation; it has already taken place. Rock climbing provides a specific example. More than half of the 80 cliffs listed in the 1982 edition of *Traprock – Connecticut Rock Climbs*, a guidebook to rock climbing in our State, are located on municipal land; all but a few have been closed. The result has been a loss of more than 370 individual rock climbs – including several routes that appear in lists of classic North American rock climbs.

A few years ago, in an attempt to regain access to these areas, the AMC, the Access Fund, and Ragged Mountain Foundation met with several municipal landowners to discuss their concerns. Potential liability was cited as the key reason why risk managers advised otherwise supportive municipal agents to restrict access to and activities on the lands they manage; the *Comway* decision was specifically referenced as a reason for recreational closures.

One can understand a municipality's desire to protect its taxpayers from increased insurance premiums, deductibles, and the expenses associated with legal defenses and responses - particularly when these costs would need to be absorbed by smaller towns. It's unfortunate that there are already restrictions on recreational access to some of our State's most notable natural resources. It would be a tremendous loss to the quality of life in Connecticut if *more* areas were closed to recreation due to increased liability concerns following the significant judgments of the past year.

The members of Connecticut AMC urge you to eliminate the risk of these potential future closures by providing municipalities with the same *limited* liability protection that is already available to other landowners.

Thank you.