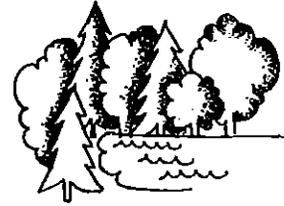


SOUTHBURY LAND TRUST, INC.

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TO: MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

FROM: TOM CRIDER, PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHBURY LAND TRUST

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 6557
AN ACT CONCERNING LIABILITY FOR THE RECREATIONAL USE OF LANDS.

Town-owned parks and open spaces are high on the list of things that make Connecticut a nice place to live. If they are closed to the public, we will lose the enjoyment of these treasured assets.

Current law puts towns in jeopardy as long as they keep parks open.

It is unreasonable to endanger towns in this way while private landowners and the State of Connecticut are protected from the same kinds of liability. It not only doesn't make sense, it exposes taxpayers in towns like ours to having to defend against lawsuits and paying millions of dollars in settlements.

Even a small town like Southbury has hundreds of miles of hiking and nature trails in parks and other open space areas. Although these trails are monitored regularly, it's unrealistic to expect the kind of vigilance that would eliminate every possibility of someone tripping over a branch or slipping on a wet rock.

Unless HB 6557 is passed, liability concerns will discourage towns from keeping parks open and from acquiring more open space for public enjoyment.

We strongly urge passage of this bill.