



**Town of
Greenwich
Conservation Commission**

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Denise Savageau
Conservation Director

February 14, 2011

To: Senator Steve Cassano, Co-chair Planning and Development
Representative Linda Gentile, Co-chair Planning and Development
Members Planning and Development Committee

From: Denise Savageau, Conservation Director

Re: Proposed H.B. No. 5049
AN ACT CONCERNING THE REMOVAL OR DESTRUCTION OF TREES

I am writing today to ask you to support Proposed HB 5049. This bill provides enabling legislation that would allow municipalities to regulate the removal and destruction of trees within their boundaries if they so choose.

For over a decade, land development practices in Connecticut have trended away from working with the landscape features, to the wholesale clear-cutting and re-grading of entire sites in preparation for development. This is often done without regard for the impact on neighbors, town infrastructure, or the community character at large, and usually prior to applicants coming into P&Z. This wholesale cutting of trees often results in increased storm water run-off leading to flooding and erosion problems down stream. It reduces groundwater infiltration and impacts air quality. It changes community character and often pits neighbor against neighbor. Indeed, in numerous public hearings leading up to the adoption of Greenwich's 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development, tree clearing was identified by residents as a major concern that needs to be addressed. Similar concerns are being expressed by towns and residents across our State.

The benefits of Connecticut's community trees and forests are many. They clean and protect our watersheds and airsheds. They buffer cold winds in winter and provide shade in the summer. New studies are being released every day that clearly document the benefits of trees to our health, safety and welfare. Trees are part of the "green" infrastructure in our communities and are as important as the water we drink and the air we breathe. They create a sense of place, something extremely important to our well being in such a fast-paced world. They are part of the public trust and need to be treated as such.

Tree ordinances are in place across the nation, helping municipalities do a better job at protecting the green infrastructure that makes each community a healthy and special place to live. We need to pass enabling legislation that allows Connecticut's municipalities to do the same. Please support HB 5049.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need additional information.