

TESTIMONY OF
THE CONNECTICUT RECREATION & PARKS ASSOCIATION
BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE'S PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 02, 2011
10:30AM, ROOM 1C
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Good morning. My name is Jason Cohen. I am a Certified Parks & Recreation Professional and the Legislative Chairperson for the Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association ("CRPA").

CRPA is a non-profit 501(C) (3) organization dedicated to the promotion, development and improvement of all recreation and parks services within the State of Connecticut. CRPA has approximately 700 members who represent almost all 169 towns in Connecticut.

**CRPA strongly supports SB 507 AAC Municipal Liability For Activities On
Recreational Facilities.**

Open space has many benefits, including improving water quality, protecting groundwater, preventing flooding, improving the quality of the air we breathe, providing vegetative buffers to development, and producing habitat for wildlife.

Providing and encouraging recreational access to open spaces has other benefits: Hunting and fishing has become an economic building block in our national economy generating more than 1.6 million jobs and more than \$2 billion annually in salaries, wages, and business earnings. In 2006, more than \$70 billion was generated in sportsmen-related retail sales. With the "ripple effect" this translates to more than \$190 billion in total economic activity.

Our parks and open space provide students young and old with an opportunity to learn about our nation's unique historical and cultural heritage. Our public lands are outdoor classrooms where the learning experience never ends regardless of whether the lesson is about wildlife, history, geology or the environment. Children and families are able to connect to preserved landscapes in a hands-on manner they simply cannot receive by reading a textbook or watching a documentary.

There are intangible and invaluable benefits in preserving public lands and telling the stories of our state's natural and cultural heritage. Our state and local parks, trails, and greenways provide day-today getaways for children and families.

A study by Penn State University showed significant correlations to reductions in stress, lowered blood pressure, and perceived physical health to the length of stay in visits to parks.

Please help us continue to provide our citizens and visitors to enjoy the opportunities available, that which we have invested considerable resources towards preserving and making accessible for all. Municipalities should be afforded the same legal protection that has been given to private landowners for the very same reason that their immunity was granted initially.

Please favorably report SB 507. This completes my testimony. Thank you for your consideration.

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