

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in support of these bills, all of which would extend to municipalities the protection from being held responsible for accidents or injuries incurred by users of their recreational facilities, parks, open spaces, etc. As a member of the Middletown Conservation Commission, I am very aware of the possibility that hikers, while using trails on any of our lands, could suffer an injury. Because municipalities are no longer immune from resulting lawsuits, my town has been forced to pay for special insurance - money that could be better used for trail maintenance. The recent exorbitant award demanded by a woman in West Hartford who bicycled the wrong way on a reservoir path with her head down and consequently crashed into a barrier, has been frightening to Conservation Commission members. I doubt the insurance would be sufficient for an award of that size. We are alarmed that our goal of preserving significant lands for the enjoyment of present and future residents would not survive such a lawsuit.

So my plea to you is: give our towns the security of knowing that they won't be penalized for doing what they should be doing - providing places for their citizens to enjoy healthy outdoor activities.

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