

I work in the field of landscape maintenance and am writing in support of HB 5049.

Few would disagree that the presence of beautiful trees in a town or neighborhood is a defining aspect of character. Giving towns the ability to control, enhance, and limit wholesale changing of neighborhood character will contribute to their character in a way that impacts the whole state as a destination for tourism or even job seekers. Trees equal charm.

Studies have shown that people in hospitals with a tree out the window recover better and live longer than people who don't.

Trees -- or their mass removal -- can impact the real estate value of a property and those around it, and the experience people have of their homes and neighborhoods. We have a true collision of the "my home is my castle and I want to do what I want to do" with "the arm bone is connected to the shoulder bone" aspect of community impact.

A fact not widely appreciated is the impact that trees have on the absorption of runoff and water table not only of the property with the trees, but the surrounding properties.

Working in the landscape field as I do, I have seen a number of homeowners negatively affected with water issues that seem to relate to recent tree removal from land upstream from them or even in the next lot over. Our foresters know the impact of tree retention and removal on stormwater management. Trees absorb enormous amounts of water, as well as reducing energy costs by shading our streets and homes. They reduce our carbon footprint and make our air better. Ill considered mass removal of trees on one property affects not only the neighbors, but can add up to impact even the cost of government. Towns closer to the cost (and farther downstream) can testify to the accumulated impact of tree removal on the towns below.

You no doubt do not need to be reminded of this, but the on-the-ground government body that is in place to deal with the day to day and incremental changes is in fact at the town level.

The issue is far bigger and we are far more interconnected by our trees than whether or not a tree blocks a view or prevents sun in a flower garden.

Towns deserve to have the right to regulate tree removal, as their citizens or the town itself may well have to pick up the tab (on everything from basement flooding issues to tree removal as a contributing factors in municipal stormwater issues).

When you have a town like Greenwich (where I don't live, but mentioned in a stormwater presentation I heard a couple years ago), you have a town downstream on I think 5 different streams. Giving them control to regulate trees will help, but it's not the full solution, in that they've got problems that arrive at their doorstep from how stormwater is managed upstream of them.

HB 5049 can provide the towns with the tools to deal with the front line issues, while recognizing that we have not only state but regional issues that relate to the impact of our land use decisions.

Sincerely,

Christine Reid
Stamford, CT