

Please support Bill 5413: AN ACT CONCERNING INVASIVE PLANTS.

Thank you for your past support in helping to deal with the important economic, environmental and health problems related to invasive plant species in Connecticut. Here in Fairfield, we have several areas of mile-a-minute vine that have taken over large areas and continue to expand into other areas, making it impossible for anything else to grow.

We have phragmites clogging our wetlands, changing the habitat and again, pushing out and preventing other, beneficial plants to grow in those areas. Multiflora rose has virtually taken over much of our open space, which although a rose, is not as sweet as native plants that provide food for wildlife and help to preserve the necessary biodiversity of our land. Garlic mustard continues to march across Fairfield, changing the soil chemistry so that our woodlands have a less hospitable environment to support trees and other important plants of our woodlands. Japanese barberry is a more likely habitat for the deer tick, which is the insect that transmits Lyme disease to humans and our pets. Bittersweet strangles our trees, killing them and helping to bring them down, along with utility lines, during storms. The list goes on and on.

There are hundreds of Connecticut residents and groups that have worked to control these problem plants. I am one of those people. I am working on eradicating invasive species in two open space areas in our Perry Mill open space without chemicals and, working with Boy Scouts, put up fencing to protect the areas until they can support their native plant habitats again. I am on Fairfield's Forestry Committee and we are setting up an Invasive Plants sub-committee to help educate the public and work in our open space as well as encourage residents to police their own properties. I volunteer at the CT Audubon and the Mill River Wetland Committee, as well as graduate of the Connecticut Master Gardener program and am on the Fairfield Earth Day Celebration committee. I see these hundreds of volunteers and groups I mentioned working together outside, on the web, with each other. But without the help of the Invasive Plants Council, our individual efforts would not be nearly as successful.

The Invasive Plants Council has served as a vital forum for citizens and interest groups to discuss, argue, and reach consensus on invasive plant issues, and put forth workable solutions, but the issues and discussions often involve voluminous scientific information and proceedings which must be compiled, reviewed, and tracked by a staff

person. The Invasive Plants Coordinator leverages thousands of hours of work and expertise from hundreds of people concerned about the destructive impacts invasive plants are having on our lakes, forests, and rivers. Without this group and staff Connecticut's land and citizen's health would be severely negatively impacted.

I strongly encourage you to endorse Bill 5413: AN ACT CONCERNING INVASIVE PLANTS to continue to fund the Invasive Plants Council so it may continue to work with these citizens and groups to help control invasive plants in our state.

Thank you,

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