

Dear Mary and Kevin,
I thought that you might be interested in
reading this.

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January 12, 2012

Representative Daniel Rovero
Legislative Office Building – Room 4004
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Re: The Connecticut Shoreline Campground 21 day Stay Law
CT Gen. Statute, Chapter 447, Sec. 23-16a

Dear Representative Rovero:

I am writing to you as an 89 year old member of a fifth generation family of camping enthusiasts – most of whom have camped at Hammonasset for many, many years. Enclosed is a photo, which was taken in 1902 – 110 years ago -- showing my mother and my grandmother sitting in front of my grandmother's camping outfit.

I have camped at Hammonasset every year since early childhood, except when the Park was closed during World War II. – always complying with the rules in effect during those times – and looking forward each summer to reunions with life-long camping friends and families. Over the years my entire family have thought of Hammonasset as their first-love for a vacation. For many of them camping at Hammonasset comprised their only vacations.

When the General Assembly meets in February, I am urging you to propose/support a Bill which would rescind or change the present 21 days per year rule.

My reasons are as follows:

1. Long-term campers (3 weeks in, 5 days out) are the very people who support the economy BIG TIME in and around the Park. We spend substantial sums each year eating in local restaurants, shopping in the local stores and visiting the local tourists attractions repeatedly. If we were limited to 21 days, the local economy would suffer, and the State would lose sales tax revenues;
2. The argument that long-term campers monopolize the campsites is not true. Only on week-ends (especially in July) are most of the campsites rented. There are many camp-sites available from Mon.-Fri. For many years I have been happily paying more than \$600 (higher fees for out-of-state-campers) for 3-week stays including the Mondays through Fridays when most of the sites would likely have been unoccupied otherwise. With enforcement of the present 21 day law, the State would lose the revenue from many mid-week campsite occupancies;

3. Unfortunately, a few disgruntled people have caused this up-roar, based on false figures of monopolized camp-sites. Everyone has an equal opportunity to apply for a camp-site at Hammonasset, and that application can be submitted and paid for 11 months prior to occupancy;
4. If the 21 Day maximum stay law remains in effect, the happy reunions mentioned above with fellow campers would be lost. There is no chance we could all be together during the same 21 day period.

Possible Solutions:

1. Revise the present law to permit 28 day stays per season (June through August), either consecutively or cumulatively;
2. Or propose that the law revert to the previous practice of 3 weeks in and 5 days out.

Currently, when the State is trying to promote tourism in an effort to increase revenue, the current 21 Day stay rule does just the opposite. It prohibits campers from paying for campsites which otherwise would likely be vacant on Mondays through Fridays.

Please exert your best efforts to rescind the present controversial, ill-advised total 21 day stay rule, and to change it as suggested above.

You have a golden opportunity in the palms of your hands to help solve this problem. Please don't let it slip through your fingers.

Sincerely,

Constance R. Muirhead