



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 215

February Session, 2012

Substitute House Bill No. 5262

House of Representatives, April 2, 2012

The Committee on Environment reported through REP. ROY of the 119th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING EQUESTRIAN USE ON CERTAIN TRAILS ON STATE PARK AND FOREST LANDS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 23-10e of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2012*):

3 (a) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection
4 shall [preserve the following trails for equine use: (1) Larkin State Park
5 trails (Southbury-Oxford-Middlebury); (2) Airline State Park trails -
6 south and north (Colchester-Hebron-Lebanon-Windham-Hampton-
7 Pomfret-Putnam); (3) Hop River State Park trails (Bolton-Coventry-
8 Andover-Columbia); (4) Moosup Valley State Park trails (Sterling-
9 Plainfield); (5) Huntington State Park trails; (6) Natchaug State Forest
10 trails; and (7) Cockaponset State Forest trails] permit equestrian use on
11 multi-use trails on state park and forest lands, unless specifically
12 prohibited by said commissioner. Prior to a decision to prohibit equine
13 use of any multi-use trail on state park and forest lands that have
14 historically been utilized by equestrians, said commissioner shall

15 consult with the Equine Advisory Council established pursuant to
16 section 23-10d.

17 (b) Nothing in this section shall prohibit nonequine uses by the
18 public of the trails specified in subsection (a) of this section nor
19 prohibit the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection
20 from temporarily closing any multi-use trail for safety reasons or the
21 protection of natural resources.

22 (c) The [preservation of a trail] permitting of equestrian use on a
23 multi-use trail by the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental
24 Protection pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall not be
25 deemed an expansion of such trail.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2012	23-10e

ENV Joint Favorable Subst.

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill, which allows equestrians to use all multi-use trails in state parks and forests, is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR BILL ANALYSIS**sHB 5262*****AN ACT CONCERNING EQUESTRIAN USE ON CERTAIN TRAILS ON STATE PARK AND FOREST LANDS.*****SUMMARY:**

By law, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner must designate trails in state parks and forests for horseback riding (CGS § 23-10c). Current law specifies certain trails that must be preserved for equine use (CGS § 23-10e).

This bill requires the DEEP commissioner to allow equestrians to use all, instead of designated, multi-use trails in state parks and forests, unless he specifically prohibits such use. It requires that before he decides to prohibit equestrians from a trail historically used for that purpose, he must consult with the Equine Advisory Council. This council was created by law in 2007 to help DEEP study the issue of preserving equine trails in Connecticut.

The bill stipulates that (1) it does not prohibit other public uses of the trails and (2) DEEP's action is not to be considered an expansion of the trails. It also explicitly allows the commissioner to temporarily close a multi-use trail for safety reasons or to protect natural resources.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2012

SPECIFIED TRAILS UNDER CURRENT LAW

Under current law, the commissioner must preserve the following trails for equine use:

1. Larkin State Park trails (Middlebury, Oxford, and Southbury);
2. Airline State Park trails – south and north (Colchester, Hampton, Hebron, Lebanon, Pomfret, Putnam, and Windham);

3. Hop River State Park trails (Andover, Bolton, Columbia, and Coventry);
4. Moosup Valley State Park trails (Plainfield and Sterling);
5. Huntington State Park trails;
6. Natchaug State Forest trails; and
7. Cockaponset State Forest trails.

Such preservation does not prohibit nonequine uses of the trails and is not considered an expansion of them.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 29 Nay 0 (03/14/2012)