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Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Legislation before the Planning and Development Committee on March 2, 2012	Support/ Oppose
S.B. 262: THE ASSESSMENT OF FARM MACHINERY AND LIVESTOCK AND THE TRANSFER OF LAND CLASSIFIED AS FARM LAND, OPEN SPACE LAND, FOREST LAND AND MARITIME HERITAGE LAND.	Support

My name is Eric Hammerling and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, the first conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. As you know, CFPA has offered testimony before the General Assembly on issues such as sustainable forestry, state parks and forests, trail recreation, natural resource protection, and land conservation every year since 1897.

Indeed, CFPA joined with the Connecticut Farm Bureau and other conservation interests in the 1950s and worked for many years on the sound concepts behind Public Act 490 before it was eventually passed by the General Assembly in 1963. Since that time, P.A. 490 has become the most important tax-based incentive encouraging landowners to preserve farmland, forests, and open space in Connecticut. Now, almost 50 years later, there is tremendous public sentiment at all levels for P.A. 490.

The great public interest in P.A. 490 necessitates a collaborative and deliberative approach to any technical corrections. We believe this careful approach is represented well in Senate Bill 262. We have been pleased to work on the substance of Senate Bill 262 in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers, Connecticut Department of Agriculture, DEEP Division of Forestry, and the Connecticut Farm Bureau.

Indeed, I would like to simply associate our testimony on R.B. 262 with the excellent comments and technical summaries provided by Carolyn Nadeau and Charlie Danna of the Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers. We strongly support S.B. 262, and hope you will also support this important, non-controversial bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill, and I am glad to respond to any questions you may have.