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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

**sHB 5262 (as amended by House "A")\***

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

#### **SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (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.

\*House Amendment "A" repeals the law that requires the DEEP commissioner to designate trails in state parks and forests for horseback riding.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2012

#### **SPECIFIED TRAILS UNDER CURRENT LAW**

The bill eliminates current law, which requires the DEEP commissioner to (1) designate trails in state parks and forests for horseback riding and (2) 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)