
From: Katchen Coley <katchencoley@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 18, 2013 6:34 PM
To: AppropriationTestimony
Subject: Governor's FY 2034-'15 Bueget

I am writing to you about some proposals that would affect adversely the quality of Ct.'s natural environments and open spaces. As a member of the Middletown Garden Club, my town's Conservation Commission, and the steering committee of the Ct. Land Conservation Coalition Council, I feel deeply the responsibility all of us have to preserve and enhance these diminishing resources.

Therefore I will point out to you four areas that would suffer under the proposed Governor's budget: 1) This year is the 100th anniversary of our State park system, but funding cuts to DEEP would close some much-used State parks, and severely reduce the quality of maintenance and safety of those still open. This budget would cut the already decimated staff, and reduce the number of critically-needed seasonal workers. In a time of economic hardship, this is financially foolish and defeats the purpose of saving the State money. May I remind you of UCONN's 2011 Economic Study that found that every \$1 spent by the 8 million visitors to our State parks returned \$38 to Ct.'s Treasury!

2) Equally devastating would be the effects DEEP's budget cuts on State forests because vitally-needed foresters would be let go. We have over 600 miles of State forest boundaries would not be regularly monitored for currently increasing invasive species such as the Asian Long-horned Beetle and the Emerald Ash Borer. Income to the State from sales of firewood to homeowners as well as wood products to commercial interests would disappear. And of course recreation by hikers, cross country skiers, hunters and fisherman would be greatly reduced.

3) The Community Investment Act (CIA) was created to help provide funds for a) historic preservation b) affordable housing, and more relevant to the State to being a good steward of Ct. land c) agricultural/dairy farmers and d) open space. But now these funds would be raided for \$4 million a year for the Healthy Foods Initiative in the Dept. of Agriculture. Worthy as the goal is of providing healthier food to our schools, it does not match the goals of CIA. of land preservation. Please move the funding source to a the budget of a more appropriate agency.

3) And lastly, Ct.'s Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) has been an independent, informative place where the people can bring their environmental concerns to a public hearing. It has been an independent agency pointing out in its annual an important environmental agenda for the Legislature. Butt now its independent watchdog status is threatened: once gain there is a proposal to move it into - and under - another agency. Please recognize the importance of keeping CEQ independent!