

**From:** Barrie Robbins-Pianka <barrettrp@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2013 11:26 AM  
**To:** AppropriationTestimony  
**Subject:** Governor's 2014-2015 Budget

To the Conservation & Development Appropriations Subcommittee :

I am writing to support the Connecticut Forest and Park Association positions regarding the following 4 conservation priorities:

**1. Keeping State Parks Open to Benefit Connecticut.**

Please do not eviscerate the staff of our State Parks. The parks belong to the public and are heavily used natural resources that should not be permitted to deteriorate.

**2. Managing Healthy State Forests for Economic, Wildlife, and Fire Threat Reduction Benefits.**

Our forests keep our air and water clean. Neglecting them now will affect the future health of Connecticut's citizens.

**3. Maintaining independence and expertise for CT Council on Environmental Quality.**

The annual report of the CEQ is an invaluable aid to State decisions affecting our environment. The people involved, led by Mr. Wagner, are extremely able and qualified to do this job and have done it effectively. Many donate their time. In my opinion, the CEQ's advisory role should be strengthened, a watchdog with teeth, rather than muzzled by the unnecessary bureaucracy of combination with the Office of Governmental Accountability.

**4. Sustain Funding for Protection of Critical Conservation Lands.**

I support the inclusion in the proposed Governor's Budget of \$10 million in bonding for acquiring open space/recreation lands as well as \$10 million in bonding to support the preservation of agricultural lands.

I do not support the proposal to divert funding from the Community Investment Act. The budget proposes diverting \$4 million/year from the CIA to the Healthy Foods Initiative in the Department of Education. These funds should be dedicated to the original purposes of the CIA fund -- open space, agricultural lands/dairy farmers, affordable housing, and historic preservation.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the State of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

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