

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Testimony in Support of H.B. No. 6355 (Section 8)

Banks Committee

Submitted by: Amy Blaymore Paterson, Esq., Executive Director

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Amy B. Paterson, Esq.
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Senator Leone, Representative Tong, Senator Linares, Representative Alberts and members of the Banks Committee:

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council in support of **Section 8** of Governor Malloy's proposal, **H. B. No. 6355: An Act Concerning Homeowner Protection Rights**, that requires the recording of mortgage assignments with the Town Clerk in the municipality in which the property is located, with a portion of the recording fees generated being returned to the state to fund the Community Investment Act (CIA).

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) works with land trusts, other conservation and advocacy organizations, government entities and landowners to increase the pace, quality and scale of land conservation in Connecticut while assuring the perpetual, high quality stewardship of conserved lands in the state. As Connecticut's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, CLCC focuses on building land trust capacity and sustainability, leading a unified land conservation voice for public policies that support land conservation, and engaging broad constituencies to foster a deep understanding of the benefits and need for land conservation. CLCC is guided by a Steering Committee with statewide representation.

The CIA was enacted to fund four specific land use programs which support the economy and create jobs. Enacted with tremendous bipartisan support in 2005 to address the social and environmental impacts of suburban sprawl, the CIA provides increased funding for state programs for **open space, farmland/dairy production, historic properties and affordable housing.** Funded by a surcharge on recording fees, the impact of the CIA on the economic well-being and overall quality of life in our communities has exceeded all expectations. Virtually every town in Connecticut has benefited from the CIA

For the conservation community, CIA funding is the only *consistent* source of funding for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWLA) grant program – the state's *only* matching grant program for land trusts, towns and water companies seeking to conserve open space. Yet the funds generated by the program fall far short of the needs existing in not only the OSWLA program but in the programs under the other three CIA funded sectors as well.

According to information submitted by the Connecticut Town Clerks Association, requiring the recording of all mortgage assignments in all municipalities would generate a substantial amount of well-needed revenue for all four of the Community Investment Act programs, including the OSWLA. CLCC therefore supports Governor Malloy's proposal to close this apparent loop-hole in document recording practices as a measure to bring revenue back to the state and the municipalities.

Thank you again for your consideration and for this opportunity to submit testimony.