

Raised H.B. No. 6539
AN ACT CONCERNING THE FORMER SUNRISE RESORT PROPERTY

My name is Kathleen Golec. I am a life-long resident of East Haddam and live within a mile of the Sunrise property. I am writing to support measures to address safety issues at Sunrise and to ask the DEEP to construct a plan for the future use of the Sunrise property.

I was initially very happy that the State purchased the property. As an outdoor enthusiast, I was imagining all the possibilities such as hiking, bike trails, and access to the beautiful Salmon River for kayakers and canoeists. In the winter it would make a wonderful destination for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Birders could enjoy the birds visiting its varied habitats year-round. I could see the possibilities of the former resort continuing as an outdoor musical event venue, much like in the days when they hosted the Connecticut Jazz Festival. Perhaps it could even be turned into another Tanglewood! The possibilities seemed endless.

Unfortunately, what we eventually got over years of the State's neglect was a ruined, vandalized property. Buildings have been smashed and stripped of whatever could be sold for scrap metal. There is graffiti everywhere. I was especially saddened to see the empty, graffiti-covered swimming pool. As a child I spent many hours swimming in that pool with my best friend whose father owned and ran the resort. Incidentally, my friend visited me nearly two years ago and went to see the resort for the first time since she left in the early Seventies. She recounted many memories of her days at the resort and was heartbroken when she saw its current condition.

As for the safety issues, there are many ranging from potential injuries due to broken glass, threat of vandalism to personal property, and threat of bodily harm. I would not go on the property alone because of fear of who I might find there. What was once a joyful place has now become a spooky, unsafe ghost town.

I urge the State of Connecticut to clean up the Sunrise Property, ensure its safety and that of those who use it, and preserve it as an outdoor recreational property. The Salmon River, which has been recognized by the Nature Conservancy as "the best example of its river type in Connecticut" runs through it. The Sunrise property must be secured, restored, and maintained to provide safe access to outdoor recreation for many future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this critical issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Golec
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