



**Testimony of Connecticut Fund for the Environment  
Before the Committee on Planning and Development**

***In opposition of HB 5146, AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN SPACE REQUIRED TO BE SET  
ASIDE BY LAND DEVELOPERS.***

Submitted by Lauren Savidge  
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*Connecticut Fund for the Environment works to protect and improve the land, air and water of Connecticut. We use legal and scientific expertise and bring people together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.*

Dear Senator Cassano, Representative Rojas, and members of the Committee on Planning and Development,

Connecticut Fund for the Environment submits this testimony in opposition of HB 5146, An Act Concerning Open Space Required to be Set Aside by Land Developers. If passed, this legislation would require open space set asides by land developers to be usable for passive recreation.

While we strongly support open space use for passive recreation, open space preservation serves many other purposes as well. The open spaces in Connecticut add to the scenic beauty and overall quality of life for residents. However, increasing development pressure and improper development planning, which leads to urban sprawl into rural and less developed areas, continually threatens our state open spaces. Open space set asides by land developers are important contributions to permanent land protections in the state to ensure responsible growth.

While land has been protected in its scenic and open space throughout the state, this legislation threatens the value provided by these parcels in requiring all open space set asides by land developers to be usable for passive recreation. Each open space parcel has conservation values specific to that piece of property and not all open space is appropriate for passive recreation.

In fact, passive recreation may destroy the conservation values of certain properties. For example, animal nesting regions could be disturbed by outdoor activities. Forested areas are not only aesthetically pleasing, but also remove carbon from the atmosphere. Living shorelines like dunes and tidal marshes provide shorefront protection against sea level rise and storm surges because they naturally and temporarily slow down and store flood waters. Riparian corridors along the edge of rivers and streams trap and remove sediment and other contaminants in runoff to maintain good water quality. These benefits could be significantly diminished with trails, boat access points, and other passive recreation development.

While passive recreation is appropriate for some open space set asides, a blanket requirement allowing passive recreation in all land developer open space set asides threatens the conservation values unique to each open space property.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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