



March 14, 2013

Representative Arthur O'Neill, CT 69th District
Connecticut House Republican Office
L.O.B. Room 4200
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: HB 6542 An Act Concerning the Preservation of Farmland at the Southbury Training School

Dear Rep. O'Neill:

COGCV staff has reviewed HB 6542, *An Act Concerning the Preservation of Farmland at the Southbury Training School* and has found it in conformity with the *Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Plan of Conservation and Development: 2008* and the *State Conservation and Development Policies Plan: 2005*.

The 900 acres of land surrounding the Southbury Training School in the Town of Southbury are of local, regional, and state significance. The property's unique combination of cultural, historical, and natural resources contributes to the rural and historic character of Southbury and makes its preservation important. The Training School property is designated a Historic District on the National and State Registries of Historic Places. A vast majority of the property is used for agriculture (46%) or has been left in a natural state (35%). In addition, the property is part of the environmentally sensitive Pomperaug River Watershed, contains an aquifer protection area, and is partially located in the 100 year flood plain of Transylvania Brook. The State Plan categorizes the property as a mix of "conservation areas," "preservation areas," and "rural." The new draft State Plan map shows a Local Conservation Factor for the agricultural land of the Southbury Training School. Preservation of the farmland at the Southbury Training School will help the state reach its goal to preserve 21% of the state's total land area as open space by 2023.

In addition, the bill's objective satisfies several recommendations from COGCV's 2008 Regional Plan:

- Protect more open space in the region.
- Encourage settlement patterns that reduce the rate of land consumption in the region.
- Recognize farmland as an important natural resource worthy of conserving for farming activity, as well as its present aesthetic and economic benefits to the community.
- Encourage efforts to preserve areas threatened by development.
- Encourage preservation of cultural resources.
- Protect water resources.

Southbury's 2012 Plan of Conservation and Development recommends preservation for a substantial portion of the Training School for open space or agriculture, which will help the Town preserve its rural and historic character. The Town would like to ensure that the future use of the

land at the Southbury Training School will maintain the site's agricultural, natural, and historic resources.

Please feel free to contact me if we can be of assistance with this proposed bill.

Sincerely,

Peter Dorpalen
Executive Director

CC: First Selectman Edward Edelson, Town of Southbury
Deloris Curtis, AICP, Land Use Administrator, Town of Southbury

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