

**Testimony regarding S.B. 1015 – An Act Concerning the New England National Scenic Trail**

My name is Donald Rieger. I live in Simsbury and am writing to urge passage of S.B. 1015, which would increase protection for the New England Trail.

Our national scenic trail is a wonderfully valuable resource, creating a corridor by which our citizens can access some of the most beautiful parts of Connecticut's open space. In the greater Hartford area, it traces a route atop the trap rock ridges through Talcott Mountain and Penwood State Parks and beyond.

Such a trail needs protection, and S.B. 1015 would put the DEEP in a better position to protect and enhance it. The New England Trail should be on a par with the Appalachian Trail in terms of the DEEP's focus and the tools available it.

In that regard, it seems to me that the bill's providing for eminent domain is unnecessary and not in keeping with the federal legislation. If that possibly controversial provision were removed, I hope the bill would be passed without it.

I am active in a land trust that has protected open space adjacent to the trail and hopes to protect further nearby tracts that could provide trail connections to it. S.B. 1015 would provide welcome state encouragement for these private eleemosynary efforts.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.