



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE MARY M. MUSHINSKY
EIGHTY-FIFTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 4038
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
HOME: (203) 269-8378
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8500
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-8267
E-mail: Mary.Mushinsky@cga.ct.gov

CO-CHAIR
PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FINANCE REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

**Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky (85th) in Support of the Recommendations of
the PRI Committee Report, State Parks and Forests: Funding**

**Before the Appropriations Committee, Conservation and Development
Subcommittee**

Tuesday, February 11, 2014

6:00 p.m. in Room 2C

The Connecticut State Parks System is 100 years old. In order to ensure the viability of the system for another 100 years, Program Review and Investigations Committee looked at the funding of state parks in fall 2013. We are submitting several copies of our Jan. 23, 2014 report to the subcommittee. The report is also available on our website. There are several key findings that the subcommittee should take into consideration:

1. The system's 2013 expenditure level is comparable to the level of 2006 using constant 2013 dollars. There is a downward trend since 2010.
2. Since 2010, park-generated revenues have gone to the General Fund. This means the CT system has become heavily reliant on the General Fund, in contrast to the national trend, with little incentive to focus on revenue raising activities. We found there are opportunities to partially fund the system using park-generated revenues.
3. Staffing levels are down and have reached a critical point regarding operations. We have documented a need for 6 additional supervisors and 6 additional maintainers.
4. Planning for the system has defaulted to "crisis management."
5. We recommend the Parks Division of DEEP perform regular reviews of all park resources and annually track performance using a Results-Based Accountability report card. Parks should measure attendance, safety and customer satisfaction.

(over)

6. We recommend Appropriations reverse its 2010 decision and appropriate a portion (25-50%) of park-generated revenues to the Parks Division, contingent upon demonstration of park performance through the RBA process. Parks must develop a plan for use and distribution of this increased funding, which should not supplant existing General Fund monies. The initial project should emphasize data-gathering, performance metrics, and analysis.
7. Park funding should move towards being based on demonstrated performance.

We are happy to meet with your subcommittee and bring our PRI research team to discuss the report's recommendations. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

attachment: State Parks and Forests: Funding (Report of PRI Committee, Jan. 23, 2014)