

**Testimony Re: Raised Bill 5415 An Act Concerning the Air Line State Park Trail**

**Dear Members of the Environment Committee,**

**The Friends of Connecticut State Parks would like to express its support for Raised Bill 5415 that seeks to expand the Air Line State Park Trail through purchase of additional property and acceptance of land donations. We do not support the acquisition of land by means of “eminent domain.” Connecticut’s wonderful Park and Forest System and its unequaled network of trails were not assembled by wresting private properties from reluctant owners. These lands came through legitimate purchase, grant or bequest. Any forced taking would send a terrible message and in the end discourage future donations from citizens.**

**Expanding the Air Line State Park Trail by connecting its already conserved sections is a wonderful goal to be steadily pursued. The existing sections have proved to be immensely popular for all types of users. Those who hike, bike, run, cross country ski, and horseback ride, or those who simply wish to stroll with toddlers in carriages have flocked to the trail. Senior citizens, and those with disabilities or mobility issues have been able to enjoy nature along the flat easy surfaces. Offering this kind of opportunity to every member of our state is so important. This, like all extended trail systems, also has the happy effect of supporting local economies; parks and trails help define what makes a truly attractive community. Offering diverse amenities helps not only to support businesses in the towns through which the trails pass, but also enterprise in all other regional towns and cities.**

**We encourage the Environment Committee to endorse Bill 5415, omitting the “eminent domain” provision. We ask that you recognize the importance of preserving this scenic trail and promote its expansion.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Eileen Grant President Friends of Connecticut State Parks  
43 Neptune Ave. Madison, CT 06443  
e-mail eileencgrant@gmail.com**