

March 3, 2014

Good afternoon. Please accept the testimony below for the hearing tomorrow on AAC Tree Trimming, HB 5408.

Many thanks.

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Member, Hamden Land Conservation Trust  
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With regard to the “Enhanced Tree Trimming” plan being proposed by the state’s utilities, I hope that you will consider the following deeply-held concerns. The healthy survival of Connecticut’s treescape, and its citizenry, is at stake.

1. The utilities’ plans should be reviewed and evaluated at least biannually to allow for adjustments as needed. Public comment should be solicited.
2. Require utilities to obtain written consent from property owners for removal of trees on private property – this is critical and currently not required.
3. Improve the definitions of what is a hazardous tree and require each tree to be assessed by utilizing the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Basic Tree Risk Assessment Form or similar industry-wide system.
4. Require utilities to plant a replacement tree for every tree removed.
5. Require utilities to grind stumps of removed trees.
6. Require that utilities provide a direct phone line to a customer service representative assigned to handle questions on (and/or objections to) tree trimming and removal.
7. Create greater accountability of tree service contractors through the requirement of a performance bond.
8. Allow tree wardens to have final say on the fate of trees in their respective jurisdictions.