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**March 17, 2014 Testimony to the Government Administration and Elections Committee
on House Bill No. 5550, An Act Concerning Certain Parcels of State Land**

My name is Joseph Hovious. I am a resident of 3 Leopard Drive in Sandy Hook, CT. I am an Environmental Engineer by training and profession, having practiced for over 45 years and have been registered as a Professional Engineer for most of that time. While I am a current member of the Newtown Conservation Commission and have been actively volunteering my expertise in conservation issues for that Commission, the Pootatuck Watershed Association, and Candlewood Valley chapter of Trout Unlimited, I am here today representing only myself.

Much of my work over the past 9 years has been on the water quality of Deep Brook and addressing threats to that watershed. A significant project involved development of the parcel represented by section six of House Bill 5550 and the neighboring property to the north which was sold to the Town of Newtown for economic development purposes in 2004. Historically, the property represented in section six was conveyed to the Town of Newtown in 2003 for open space and recreational purposes, but the transfer was never completed. The level of development and protection of the Brook has been controversial since that time as various development options have been proposed and discussed. Currently, the parcel slated for economic development is on hold, awaiting Corps of Engineers wetland permits while the property in section six awaits transfer to the Town.

The events of 12/14 were devastating to all of us in Sandy Hook, Newtown, and throughout the world. I am sympathetic and support the efforts of the Hubbard Foundation to create a memorial wildlife sanctuary dedicated to their daughter. However, the suggested level of development in this location is well beyond that imagined in a typical sanctuary and creates several problems as detailed by Mr. Zakur. For example, the level of development is not defined. Entry roads are primitive with limited crossing over Deep Brook and will require major development. Buffer zones are undefined. While the proposed sanctuary may be a great dream, this is not a great location for that dream.

I request that the parcel in section six of the bill be removed from consideration at this time until a full study of alternatives and the impacts of development on Deep Brook can be completed.

Thanks you for your time. I am available for any questions.