

NTT

16 Meriden Road  
Rockfall  
Connecticut 06481-2961  
Tele: 860-346-TRILL  
www.ctwoodlands.org



Connecting people to the land since 1895

*Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association*

Public Hearing Subject Matter	Support/ Oppose
RAISED BILL 5057: AN ACT CONCERNING THE ASSESSMENT OF HORSES AND PONIES AND FARM MACHINERY AND THE TRANSFER OF LAND CLASSIFIED AS FARM LAND, OPEN SPACE LAND, FOREST LAND AND MARINE HERITAGE LAND.	Support

Co-Chairs Osten, Rojas, and Members of the Planning & Development Committee:

My name is Eric Hammerling and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA), the first conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. CFPA has offered testimony before the Legislature on issues such as sustainable forestry, state parks and forests, trail recreation, natural resource protection, and land conservation for over 115 years. CFPA was also one of the primary organizations that advocated for the Public Act 490 program that over the past 50 years has been the most successful law for keeping Connecticut's forests, recreational lands, and farms intact as essential parts of our rural, suburban, and urban landscapes.

**I am here to testify in strong support of HB 5057 -- An Act Concerning the Assessment of Horses and Ponies and Farm Machinery and the Transfer of Land Classified as Farm Land, Open Space, Forest Land, and Maritime Heritage Land.** This bill is non-controversial and focused on technical amendments. Furthermore, it is supported by a broad group of partners who work with the Public Act 490 law on a daily basis at both State and local levels – the Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, CT Association of Assessing Officers, CT Farm Bureau, and CFPA.

As you might imagine, CFPA has a particular interest in the conservation of Connecticut's forests. Since 2004, a certified forester's report is required as part of a new application for forest land classification under P.A. 490, and we believe this helps to better inform a forest landowner about their management options. However, under existing law, when a property is transferred to a new owner, a certified forester's report is not required in certain excepted instances. To ensure property owners are informed about current forest land management standards, a certified forester's report should be required in all instances unless a certified forester's report exists that is less than 10 years old.

We would support an amendment to this important raised bill, as we believe DEEP will suggest, that would specify that a certified forester's report is required "within ten years" prior to the change of ownership. This should benefit landowners in understanding their forest management options, and support better forest stewardship on over 300,000 acres of forest lands classified under P.A. 490.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be glad to respond to any questions you may have.