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Testimony in Support of Raised H.B. 5057
to the Committee on Planning and Development
Submitted by: Amy Blaymore Paterson, Esq., Executive Director
February 14, 2014

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

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) in support of Raised H.B. 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, which provide technical corrections and updates to Public Act 490 (P.A. 490), one of Connecticut's most important laws to help preserve open space, forestland and agricultural lands.

CLCC works with land trusts, government entities, other conservation and advocacy organizations, and landowners to increase the pace, quality and scale of land conservation in Connecticut while assuring the perpetual, high quality stewardship of conserved lands in the state. As Connecticut's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, CLCC focuses on building land trust capacity and sustainability, leading a unified land conservation voice for public policies that support land conservation, and engaging broad constituencies to foster a deep understanding of the benefits and need for land conservation. CLCC is guided by a Steering Committee with statewide representation.

Enacted by the General Assembly in 1963, P.A. 490 has become one of, if not the most, important tax-based incentive encouraging landowners to preserve farmland, forests, and open space in Connecticut by enabling them to pay tax on P.A. 490 land at its current use value, rather than highest value. H.B. 5057 provides for technical updates and clarifications to the language in P.A. 490, without changing this incentive or any other critical component of the Act.

We therefore are in support of H.B. 5057 and respectfully associate our testimony with the additional comments and technical summaries provided by Eric Hammerling, on behalf of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, fiscal sponsor of CLCC.

Thank you for your consideration and for this opportunity to submit testimony to support P.A. 490.

