

Testimony on H.B. No. 5416
An Act Concerning the Air Line Trail

Submitted to the Environment Committee

By

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Over several month's last year, I had the pleasure of biking the entire 50 mile Air Line trail from East Hampton to Putnam. This is a unique and wonderful resource for CT residents and visitors. It provides recreational and aesthetic value for walkers, hikers, bikers, birders, families, nature lovers, and history buffs. While users of the trail enjoy its benefits, they also generate economic value to the local communities through which it passes. While traveling the trail I personally have frequented restaurants, retail stores, and campgrounds.

Taking advantage of the total length of the Air Line while the right of way is still undeveloped just makes sense for the state of CT and further enhances this unique CT asset. Development of the Portland section of the trail brings the Air Line to the CT River and provides the opportunity for extension over the Arrigoni Bridge into Middletown, linking "east of the river" with the west. With the exception of the use of eminent domain, I support the passage of H.B. 5416 allowing the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to acquire rights-of-way and easements for the purpose of protecting or enhancing the Air Line State Park Trail.

Thank you
Kathy Hall