

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
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TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897

February 18, 2014

Representative Gail Lavielle
Legislative Office Building,
Room 4060
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

RE: Raised Bill 70 to protect State Parks & Forests in perpetuity

Dear Representative Lavielle:

The Conservation Commission of the Town of Wilton strongly supports Raised Bill 70. This is an important piece of legislation that safeguards the state's open space, not just for today's residents, but for future residents for whom the land was also intended to benefit. Further, owners of potential open space may turn away from the State if the State's record demonstrates the will of the seller may be disregarded in years to come.

Open space is not the necessity of Connecticut's residents for just today or even the next several decades. It is a necessity in perpetuity. Open space rarely comes to the State without significant effort on the part of many; an effort that was driven by the intrinsic value of the land, its capacity to support wildlife, vegetation, and protect our water resources, its cultural and aesthetic value, and value to humans in its natural state. While each protected piece may not consistently hold the highest value, it still holds value and this should not be repeatedly reconsidered at the will of the times. Not only does this disregard our responsibility to the future generations the land was intended to benefit, it also needlessly forces a call to action to protect open space that has ironically already been protected.

These discussions and proposals also do not go unnoticed by landowners who may be contemplating protecting their land now or in the future. The State puts itself in a bad light and damages its image of a trustworthy land steward. It is likely, too that the State's betrayal of public trust will thwart efforts of municipalities, as well. We are both entities of government, capable of harming the other's reputation. The mocking statement "trust me I'm from the government," could easily be applied to a State who is willing to sell off its open space and damage its future success in open space preservation.

Raised Bill 70 will make it feasible to permanently protect open space, as it was intended, without the need to repeatedly wage the same defense. Open space is not just for our residents of today, but it is our duty to safeguard it for our residents in perpetuity. Please vote in favor of Raised Bill 70.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia Sesto".

Patricia Sesto
Director of Environmental Affairs