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Testimony Supporting SB 70 AAC The Preservation Of Lands Under The Control Of The Department Of Energy And Environmental Protection And The Department Of Agriculture.

By Senator Toni Boucher

February 19, 2014

Chairman Meyer, Chairman Gentile, Ranking Member Chapin, Ranking Member Shaban, and other distinguished members of the Environment Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 70 An Act Concerning The Preservation Of Lands Under The Control Of The Department Of Energy And Environmental Protection And The Department Of Agriculture.

This important bill will help to protect Connecticut's open space by permanently preserving state lands of high conservation value.

Whatever the importance of its individual parcels, Connecticut's open space as a whole is a precious and irreplaceable resource. As such, its value should not be subject to constant revision, and it should not be necessary to continually defend this land from being repurposed.

Over the years, we in Connecticut have become increasingly conscious of the vital role that the environment plays in our quality of life. Open space contributes to public health by supporting a wide variety of low impact recreational activities. It acts as a bellwether for observing changes in the environment, and offers numerous educational and scientific opportunities. Finally it preserves the ecological richness of Connecticut, its biodiversity, and the natural beauty which attracts would-be residents and creates a salutary environment in which to live and raise a family.

The state of Connecticut should recognize the permanent value of such a vital resource. SB 70 will allow Connecticut's open space program to realize its original intentions, removing any doubt about the state's commitment toward protecting our environment, and ensuring its preservation for future generations. I therefore hope that the members of the Environment Committee will vote to support this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.