

Connecticut General Assembly
Appropriations Committee
Hartford, CT

Submitted Testimony: Bill# HB 6824 Governor's Proposed Biennium Budget
March 1, 2015

To Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am submitting this written testimony to strongly recommend to each of you to reverse the proposed reduction of \$2,000,000 in the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's State Parks budget. A cut of this magnitude would cause irreparable harm to the operations and maintenance of our state parks system and make it a virtual certainty that several state parks will either be closed or will be forced to operate in sub par conditions.

There is currently little room for reductions in a state park budget that is already stressed. After fixed costs are factored in, one of the few areas a cut of this magnitude could be met would be to take the money from two potential sources, the Operations account or the Seasonal Position account. Taking the money from the Operations account would almost eliminate the entire account leaving virtually no money to operate and maintain the state parks. Taking the money from the seasonal account, would result in a 2/3rds reduction in seasonal staff. Simply put, this could cause the closure or reduced operations of several state parks that rely so heavily on seasonal positions, such as life guards, campground staff, and maintainers, that provide the necessary services expected by our state park visitors.

I am urging each of you to reverse this proposed budget cut and maintain the current level of funding for our state parks for the coming fiscal year.

Thank you.

Steven O. Fish
Member, Board of Directors
Friends of Connecticut State Parks