

2/12/2015

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Members of the Environment Committee

Re: SB 215, An Act concerning the Establishment of State Parks

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB 215. I wish to mention a few points for consideration:

1: This is clearly a politically motivated partisan response to the establishment of the State's newest park in Waterford. Senator Formica previously had no known position on the State's handling of the Seaside property. Subsequent to his election and at the behest of his fellow republican and friend Selectman Dan Steward of Waterford, Senator Formica has now proposed a bill which seeks to limit the state's ability to designate new state parks. Senator Formica is seeking to model legislation based on the experience of his fellow republican first selectman who for his entire tenure has sought additional tax revenue from the abandoned State property. Selectman Steward "backed the wrong horse" in his blind and continued support of an unfunded developer. Governor Malloy's decision to keep the land for a State park seems to have "annoyed" Selectman Steward. Senator Formica proposes that local towns be consulted and that long term funding is in place prior to the establishment of any new state parks. This may be a laudable proposal but it is entirely impractical. Proposed SB 215 is no more than politics 101 for Senator Formica.

2: Who will oversee and enforce the implementation of SB 215? What will it cost? How will it be implemented?

3: In Waterford, at one time the State and town governments were in agreement about how to deal with the local State property, but after more than 12 years there has been no result. Imagine if the town and State disagree. If towns are allowed a "pre-approval" forum the process could take decades and cost millions.

The plan in Waterford was ill-advised from the beginning. State land like the parcel in Waterford should be enjoyed by all the state's residents, not just the few who can afford it.

Burdening the municipality, or for that matter the state with the enormous costs of adaptive rehabilitation of functionally obsolescent buildings is counterproductive , expensive and jeopardizes the long term viability of any State park.

I am concerned that the passage of SB 215 will inhibit and delay the establishment of Seaside State Park in Waterford as well as any new parks the State might establish.

I therefore respectfully request that you vote in opposition to SB 215.

Sincerely,

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