

RE: SB No. 215, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW STATE PARKS.

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Groton Open Space Assoc. Vice-President

Dear Members of the Environment Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB215. The Groton Open Space Association is a 695-member organization that is responsible for helping to Save the Haley Farm State Park and Bluff Point State Park & Coastal Reserve. I wish to express our very strong and unequivocal opposition to the insertion of new restrictive language into existing statutes regarding the establishment of any additional state parks. **The following History tells you why.**

Back in 1963 a beautiful Farm called the Haley Farm in Groton was up for a zone change so that the developer could build 250 duplex houses. If that had passed, the development would have needed at least 2 new schools. The town planning preferred that it be used for residential development. This Farm was located on Palmer Cove that feeds into Long Island Sound. The State Environmental Commission (then called the CT Pk & Forest Comm.) showed much interest if we would raise ¼ of the funds to purchase this land. The Groton Open Space Assoc. (GOSA) was formed with me as President in 1967. The Statewide organization, the CT Forest & Park Assoc. came down to offer advice and then acted as the non-profit umbrella organization to help in our fund drive. 200 acres of the land was saved in 1970. We were featured in the July 4, 1970 Life Magazine article called "Battles Won". The developer had held out the upper 50 acres and it took 32 years of fighting development pressure for that portion to be saved. Since 1985 GOSA has paid a farmer to do the annual cutting of the fields, and we continue with stewardship dealing with such events as Hurricane Sandy.

In 1972 the Bluff Point Advisory Committee (BPAC) was formed by the legislature to come up with the highest and best use of the peninsula, which I co-chaired . The development pressures were extreme !!! It included a four-lane highway down to the bluff promoted by the Regional Planning Agency. The state was planning to fill in the marsh behind the beach for a 4000 car parking lot; Mr. Moses planned a bridge from Long Island; a 400 boat marina was planned up the Poquonnock River; as well as a 400 acre housing development needing at least 1 new school on the east side; an industrial development; plus a sewer outfall down the west side, through the bluff and out to Seaflower Reef (promoted by the town), and the last was underground oil storage on the ridge promoted by the Federal Government.

ENOUGH !!! SAID REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR THOMAS J. MESKILL in 1974. THIS PLACE IS TOO SPECIAL. The last undeveloped coastal peninsula in the State. We will negotiate a price and SAVE Bluff Point for the people of CT. On November 23, 2014 The Day columnist David Collins stated that BP State Park is "among the grandest waterfront parks in Southern New England".

A RR bridge across Amtrak's lines joins BP & HF that now totals 1,000+ acres preserved for open space. Walkers, runners such as Johnny Kelley and Amby Burfoot, Boston marathon winners and the High School track team, bikers, x-country skiers, and horseback riders use those parks 7 days a week. The DEEP 2013 figures estimated over 450,000 people came there. The town receives pilot funds for the land. This is a major resource.

If this bill No 215 had gone through back then, we would have NO OPEN SPACE there now; only development. Turn this Bill Down!!! PLEASE.