

March 3, 2015

Dear Connecticut Law Makers,

I am writing in strong opposition to the proposed cuts in the Governor's budget (**S.B. 946**, section 29) of Community Investment Act (CIA) funds.

I am also strongly opposed to the additional sweep of \$10 million in Open Space funds proposed in the Governor's Deficiency Bill (**H.B. 6825**, section 5).

The CIA Benefits every community. Enacted with **tremendous bipartisan support** in 2005, the CIA provides critical funding for state programs for open space conservation, farmland preservation/dairy support, historic properties preservation, and affordable housing development.

These funds were collected via a \$40 surcharge on local recording fees for the specific purposes stated above. They should NOT be swept away for deficit financing! The CIA has invested over \$133 million for 1,100 projects in 165 Connecticut towns and the numbers continue to increase.

The CIA is Critical to Land Conservation. The CIA is the only consistent source of funding for the Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA). **A sweep of these funds would seriously impact the State's clearly stated GOAL to preserve 21% of Connecticut's land as open space by the year 2023, a total of 673,210 acres.**

- CIA investments boost local and state economies (projects have contributed to the viability of the \$873 million outdoor recreation industry and the \$3.5 billion agricultural industry)
- CIA investments leverage millions of matching funds (200% in private, federal and local sources invested back into our communities)
- CIA = Jobs! (CIA projects have created over 3,000 jobs in affordable housing and historic preservation, and over 28,000 jobs in the agricultural industry)

My town, Guilford CT, has benefitted from a number of Open Space grants secured though Guilford Land Conservation Trust (GLCT). Right now, GLCT is in the process of applying for a new Open Space grant to preserve a private 'in holding' in the middle of West Woods (1,200 acres). West Woods is partially owned by the State Forests, GLCT and the town of Guilford. This beautiful forest is enjoyed every year by thousands of people from all around the state. It is considered a State treasure! Its importance was recognized very early and its preservation began in the 1920's. We cannot be the generation that let the missing puzzle pieces in this vast forest slip through our fingers.

Please reject cuts to CIA and Open Space grant programs.

Thank you,

-Sarah Shrewsbury

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Lifelong resident of Guilford with 100% voting record

