

Gaetano, Carolyn

From: Corrine Folsom-O'Keefe <jubilee832001@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2015 5:24 PM
To: GAETestimony
Subject: Oppose Transfer of Silver Sands and Centennial State Forest Lands

To whom it may concern,

I am shocked to hear of the proposed transfer of 4 acres of land (Conveyance Act, House Bill 6998) that is part of Silver Sands State Park, an Important Bird Area, from the State to the Town of Milford to be converted into a parking lot. Silver Sands is one of 27 recognized Important Birds Areas in the State of CT (<http://ct.audubon.org/silver-sands-state-park>). It serves as a foraging area for egrets and herons nesting on Charles Islands, provides wintering habitat for the American Black Duck and is one of the most regularly used areas in Connecticut for such winter raptors as Rough-legged Hawk, Snowy and Short-eared Owls. In addition, the upland habitats of the State Park provide stopover habitat for migrating songbirds in the spring and fall. Habitat for birds and other wildlife along the coast of CT is a rare resource and should not be just given away without full consideration of the ecological impact of such a transfer.

The ecological values of state lands should be assessed and considered before lands are given away or potentially harmful activities are permitted. In addition to the Silver Sands transfer, Bill 6998 also includes the transfer of 4 parcels (>100 acres) of Centennial State Forest to the town of Fairfield. Currently, the Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) owns the land and Aquarion Water Company holds conservation easements on these properties. This proposal was made without the knowledge of either DEEP, Aquarion, or of The Nature Conservancy who works in partnership with DEEP and Aquarion on the land management of the Centennial Watershed Forest. Examination of the ecological impacts of mining on state lands in Killingly/Plainfield and Canterbury/Brooklyn (also part of Bill 6998) should also take place before such actions are permitted.

We have the responsibility to taking care of our natural resources for future generations. Please do not transfer lands without considering ecological impacts and more specifically please remove sections 3, 8, 15, and 16 from House Bill 6998.

Thank you.

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