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H.B. 6998

**"AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PARCELS OF STATE LAND"**

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, Senator McLachlan, and Representative Smith thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 6998, "AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PARCELS OF STATE LAND."

For the record, I am State Representative Roberta Willis, representing the 64<sup>th</sup> District.

Sections 3 and 8 of this bill are of particular concern because the State is transferring preserved State property without needed review and assessment. Section 3 of the bill transfers Silver Sands State Park to the municipality for the purpose of creating a parking lot. Section 8 of this bill seeks to convey 100 acres of the Centennial Watershed Forest to Fairfield. If existing public lands are to be conveyed for some private, municipal, or other use, there must be a significant benefit to the greater public. Yet there is no proof that this is case in this situation, especially since there has not been a process to prove this threshold has been achieved. The legislature has recently experienced the disagreeable situation when we were faced with the situation in East Haddam in the conveyance bill.

In an effort to prevent another such situation and ones that are now being proposed in Sections 3 & 8, I introduced HB 5686: "AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPROVAL OF LAND SWAPS" which would prohibit the swapping of land that has been conserved as open space or farmland unless the land to be received in such swap is of greater ecological value and to provide for public notice and comment prior to any legal agreement to undertake such land swap.

I am hopeful that the committee will remove section 3 relating to the Silver Sands State Park and Section 8 relating to the Centennial Watershed Forest. Sections 14 and 15 convey easements for mining through a state forest in Plainfield.

Thank you again for your consideration of my comments. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.