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Sen. Osten, Rep. Miller and members of the Planning and Development Committee:

My name is Bob Ferrarotti and I am the owner of 9-hole Stonybrook Golf Course in Litchfield and 18-hole Fairview Farm Golf Course in Harwinton. I have come before various committees in 2003, '05, '06, '07, and 2014 to speak on the issue of golf course assessment.

I continue to have to compete with municipal courses that pay no taxes and receive supplemental funds from the government. The "improvements wheel of fortune" continues to spin as my own situation demonstrates. I appealed my assessment in Litchfield in October, 2014, opening my books and indicating to the Board of Assessment Appeals the depressed state of the golf industry. My tax burden in Litchfield was reduced substantially, indicating to me the Town's desire to keep the 70 acres open as a golf course and not developed. In Harwinton, a similar assessment appeal brought very little relief, and the assessor continues to arbitrarily assign a number to all of my excess acreage as her improvement system.

This bill, appropriately, would be amending PA-490. In my opinion, that is where golf courses belong. I would submit that my courses and the others in the state are some of the most beautiful open space acres utilized by the populace.

Our municipalities spend millions on open space purchases and maintenance. In golf courses, you have a caretaker who will do the work if he or she is given the chance. The City of Hartford must realize the importance of golf courses to the quality of life of its citizens as they are investing millions to renovate Keney and Goodwin Parks. While I still feel it is inappropriate that I need to compete with government money, I applaud their effort to preserve the beautiful open space these parks occupy.

I sincerely hope this legislature will have the foresight that your predecessors had when they passed PA-490. The state of the game of golf can no longer produce adequate income to pay the taxes that "improvements" on course construction generate. I assure this committee that there will be more courses meeting the same fate as Canton and Pistol Creek.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Bill #970, an Act concerning the Taxation of All Public and Private Golf Courses.

Sincerely,

Bob Ferrarotti

Owner, Fairview Farm and Stonybrook Golf Courses