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Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
Hartford, CT 06106
Email: cga.ct.gov

RE: HB2864 - \$2,000,000 Budget Cut

Dear Appropriations Chairs Representative Walker and Senator Bye;

I am writing because I am concerned about the significant budget cut you have proposed for Connecticut's State Parks. A two million dollar reduction in the Parks budget will mean deep cuts to existing (bare-bone) staff levels resulting in diminished access to swimming areas, smaller restoration budgets for the aging infrastructure, such as beach pavilions, picnic groves and the other amenities our parks offer. Many parks will be open fewer hours and for fewer days.

In Connecticut, no matter where you are, there's a State Park or Forest within fifteen minutes of you. How lucky we are! From the shoreline beaches and marshes of places like Hamonasset and Sherwood Island to small forested parcels, to the gems that we enjoy by kayak along the CT River, to Dinosaur State Park, to Fort Trumbull, each of these parks deserves our stewardship and support. They tell a story of preservation and pride. They represent the diversity of Connecticut's landscape.

As the population of Connecticut grows and open lands become developed, more and more people turn to our State Parks for spiritual refreshment, contemplation of nature, recreation and relaxing outings with family and friends. There's something for everyone, at all times.

Our State Parks and Forests are treasures. I hope you will reconsider the budget cut you have proposed. Current staffing levels and tight budgets for our 108 Parks already create significant challenges to park managers who endeavor to maintain programs, trails, buildings and properties.

What do you imagine when someone says, "It's like a walk in a park"? The image I conjure up is of a sunny day, hot sand, a shady pavillion, laughing children splashing in the waves and a good book. It should be that easy.

Please support our Parks!

Sincerely,



Sally Harold
Treasurer, Friends of Connecticut State Parks