

Testimony Concerning the Governor's Deficiency Bill (Section 5 of HB 6825) and the Governor's Budget Proposal SB 946 (Section 29 (b))

My name is Starr Sayres, resident of East Haddam, CT, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, a distinguished conservation organization that has served Connecticut for 120 years.

Concerning **HB 6825**, I wish to voice my strong opposition to **Section 5** that proposes to divert \$15.2 million from the Community Investment Act into the General Fund. This bill, if passed would remove \$10 million from the DEEP open space program in 2015. I can speak personally to the negative impact this will have on Connecticut communities. My husband and I chose to make East Haddam our home because we treasure the benefits of living in a pastoral setting with its quiet beauty and recreational opportunities. East Haddam is prized by visitors from far and wide not only for its renowned tourist attractions - Gillette Castle and the Goodspeed Opera - but for its rural character, open fields, parks, trails and forests. Many of these have been conserved through the dedicated efforts of local citizens and made possible through shared funding by the CIA. Imagine if you will, what the profile of our town and that of so many Connecticut towns would be like had this collaboration not been possible. Should CIA funds now be withdrawn, these kinds of critical opportunities to protect important habitats and unique parcels - so often made vulnerable by estate tax pressures and building development - would most certainly be lost forever.

Further undercutting Connecticut's historic statewide effort to protect open space for future generations, the **Governor's Budget Proposal (SB 946, Section 29(b))** seeks to remove all CIA funds from January 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. I hardly need state the damage that would result from this action. I would ask that Section 29(b) be removed from the Governor's Budget.

Thank you for your consideration.