



Appropriations Committee Hearing 4/21/15

Testimony Regarding HB 6825 – Section 5

The Southbury Land Trust strongly opposes Section 5 of HB 6825 which, if passed, will eliminate \$15.2 million from the Community Investment Act fund, \$10 million of which is supposed to be used by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to acquire open space.

Ever since the CIA was enacted in 2005 our organization has utilized this source of funding to preserve key parcels of farmland and other types of open space in order to enhance the rural quality of life for present and future residents of our town. Many other Connecticut land trusts have benefitted their communities in this way as well.

The CIA is the only consistent source of funding for the state's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA) – the state's matching grant program for land trusts, towns and water companies seeking to conserve open space.

The sweep of the CIA account will undermine the administration, function and viability of the OSWA program, dealing a serious blow to the land conservation community's ability to protect land and help the state meet its statutory goal of conserving 21% of state lands by 2023 – a goal which the state is already not on track to meet even under current funding conditions.

We respectfully urge the Committee to oppose these proposed cuts to the Community Investment Act.

Tom Crider, President