

Greetings –

This testimony in strong support of HB 5686 on Land Swaps is being provided by the Connecticut River Gateway Commission. The Gateway Commission is statutorily enabled pursuant to Sections 25-102a through 102s of the Connecticut General Statutes and is responsible for the prevention of the deterioration of the natural and traditional riverway scene within the Gateway Conservation Zone which exists along the Connecticut River from Haddam and East Haddam south to Old Saybrook and Old Lyme, this for present and future citizens of the State of Connecticut.

The Commission strongly supports the bill as it currently exists but requests that the intent of the bill be further strengthened by the addition of language which requires that any swap be evaluated for **compatibility with scenic qualities and with reference to evaluation for other criteria including scientific and historic values** in addition to those listed in the draft bill.

From the perspective of the Gateway Commission, the need for this additional decision criteria would reflect their statutory mission, established by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1973. The need for the additional evaluation criteria is borne out of considerations raised as a result of the recent failed land swap that was proposed along the Connecticut River in the Tylerville section of Haddam.

Mission of the CT River Gateway Commission:

**Sec. 25-102a. Public interest in lower Connecticut River.** It is found that the lower Connecticut River and the towns abutting the river possess unique scenic, ecological, scientific and historic value contributing to public enjoyment, inspiration and scientific study, that it is in the public interest that the provisions of this chapter be adopted to preserve such values and to prevent deterioration of the natural and traditional riverway scene for the enjoyment of present and future generations of Connecticut citizens and that the powers of the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, conferred by the provisions of section 22a-25, should be exercised in the furtherance of the purposes hereof in conformity with his general responsibility to preserve the natural resources of the state.

For the CT River Gateway Commission,



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