

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
NATURAL HERITAGE, OPEN SPACE AND LAND ACQUISITION REVIEW BOARD

Diana Atwood Johnson, Chair
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“Open Space, Once Gone, Lost Forever”

To: Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee re: SB 946

The NHOS&LA Review Board is an independent advisory group of volunteers appointed by the Governor and the leadership of the House and Senate under cga 7-131(e) to oversee the *Protected Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program* and the *Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program*.

Connecticut’s Open Space matching grant program receives it’s only consistent funding stream from the Community Investment Act. CIA’s specific objectives incentivize towns, cities, and the state’s residents to accomplish goals that are critical to the quality of life in Connecticut: affordable housing, farmland preservation, historic preservation and the acquisition of open space.

The NHOS&LA Review Board oversees implementing the Community Investment Act’s intent: “to provide financial assistance to municipalities and nonprofit land conservation organizations to acquire land for open space.

Grants may be for the purchase of land that is

1. valuable for recreation, forestry, fishing, conservation of wildlife or natural resources;
2. a prime natural feature of the state’s landscape; habitat for native plant or animal species listed as threatened, endangered or of special concern;
3. a relatively undisturbed outstanding example of a native ecological community which is uncommon;
4. important for enhancing and conserving water quality; valuable for preserving local agricultural heritage; or
5. eligible to be classified as Class I or Class II watershed land.

Without CIA funds, the opportunity to purchase lands critical to achieving the State’s goal of protecting 21% of Connecticut’s lands by 2023 will be lost. Funds from CIA match and leverage private, municipal and federal dollars, thus SAVING the state money while accomplishing great things that are a current and abiding legacy of us all. From the Preserve in Old Saybrook to the Ethel Walker School open space in Simsbury to the Green and Community Garden Awards for distressed communities, CIA money has benefited every town in Connecticut.

I urge you to leave the Community Investment Act funds where they are; where they are doing the most good; for their intended purpose established by you, our legislators to permanently and significantly benefit the people and land you represent.

Diana Atwood Johnson (Old Lyme), Chair

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