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To: Governor Daniel Malloy, State Senators, and State Representatives

From: Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust, Inc.

Re: Comments on S.B. 946 Section 29 Governor's Budget and H.B. 6825 Section 5
Governor's Deficiency Bill

Dear Governor Malloy, Senators, and Representatives,

I am writing to voice opposition to the proposed sweeps of Community Investment Act (CIA) funds from their intended purpose in order to balance the Fiscal Year 2015-16 and 2016-17 State budgets.

The Community Investment Act is a unique funding source which benefits all corners of Connecticut and many thousands of State residents. The CIA has funded 1100 projects in 165 towns for a total of \$133 million given back to Connecticut. CIA projects have created over 3,000 jobs. The \$873 million outdoor recreation industry and the \$3.5 billion dollar agricultural industry, which together generate 28,000 jobs, are strengthened by CIA investments in local farm businesses and land protection. Finally, the CIA requires matching funds, leveraging millions of dollars in addition to what State puts towards projects (200% in private, federal and local sources invested back into our communities). The CIA is a bipartisan highly successful funding source which brings in to the State many more funds than what are spent.

Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust is the largest land trust in Connecticut and the 18th largest in the United States. Weantinoge protects over 9000 acres of land in Connecticut and our work supports working farms, outdoor recreation, water quality preservation, and habitat enhancement. Our working region—Litchfield County—has directly benefitted from the Community Investment Act through the Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program, Historic Preservation grants, Farmland Protection grants, and investments in affordable housing. Litchfield County, home to the Housatonic River and a thriving tourism industry, would suffer if funds from the act are swept away from their intended purpose.

We strongly encourage you to leave the CIA Funds where they are intended to be—as investments in Connecticut's jobs, farms, clean water forests, and communities.

Sincerely,

Paul Elconin
Director of Land Conservation