

Re. Proposed Bill SB 833

I am writing in support of the above referenced bill addressing tree trimming done on our state roads. Over the last few years the tree "trimming," especially along Rt. 9 and Rt. 2, has been visually devastating to two of the most beautiful highways in our State.

I remember being awed by the incredible scenic beauty of Rt. 9 when I first moved to CT 20 years ago. Today I am heartbroken whenever I drive it. Some of the stretches in the center of the highway are now completely denuded of trees and all vegetation, except for the weeds that have grown in among the stumps and chipped rubble left behind. Now while driving this section you see unsightly guard rails, weeds, and traffic in the opposite lane that was previously hidden by trees and understory. And mowing the weeds will be almost impossible with the stumps (and many times large branches) left behind, even if the state wanted to spend the extra money to do so. It is my understanding that the DOT's response to this complaint was that they would "spray herbicides" to take care of the weeds. Does that make good sense? - remove the mature trees that keep out the weeds, then have to spray herbicides all over the roadsides to kill the weeds? That will also look very ugly -- big dead weeds. What are they thinking??

And what the DOT calls "trimming" is in fact removal of many trees by way of a terrible new piece of machinery that just shreds and grinds whole trees and limbs, leaving an unsightly "chewed off" effect all down the highway. The DOT was quoted as saying they were concentrating on removing invasive locust trees. Not so! Beautiful small trees such as birch and cedars are hacked down along with everything else -- these machines do not discriminate. Large outcroppings in the median of Rt. 9 were completely denuded of these small trees and look ridiculous now. Was anyone thinking about what they were doing other than just putting in hours?

Basically, I believe this work was an overreaction to our "hundred year storm" of several years ago. And it was completely unnecessary and a waste of taxpayer money. Besides making this lovely road an eyesore, the trees that remain are now much more vulnerable than ever to wind and ice because they have been stripped of the protective tree canopy they once had all around them.

I am hopeful that proposed Bill SB 833 will help curb some of the thoughtless tree work that is being done all around the state by allowing public input before such work begins.

Sincerely,

Jill Matthew