

Testimony to Combat Budget Cuts that Hurt Forests, Parks, and Open Space Dave Rauch

Please fund for CT Natural assets and vote against Budget cuts that hurt forests, parks, and open space.

I am writing to ask you to maintain appropriate funding for programs that protect and expand the natural environment in CT.

CT can never be the lowest cost state. However, we have a state that many feel is a great place to live, do business and visit. Connecticut's rich natural beauty; generally clean, healthy surroundings and easy access to outdoor recreation are very strong components of that appeal. The CT environment is a key part of what defines life in CT and protecting it is fundamental to keeping CT attractive.

There is much discussion about less expensive states to retire. We plan to retire in CT because it is a nice home. Like any other home, it needs investment and attention to remain a nice place to live.

Fiscal prudence for CT requires that we maintain our strong appeal. And that appeal includes a highly enjoyable great outdoors.

UConn's Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA) found that outdoor activities on state lands have an economic benefit of more than \$1 billion a year and 9,000 jobs. The study also documented that for every dollar the state spends on the state park system, it receives a return of \$38 in economic activity.

Please vote and lobby your colleagues to protect the natural appeal CT offers.

Please vote for the funding needed for conservation programs and please vote against Budget cuts that hurt forests, parks, and open space.

Sincerely

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Cc:
Sen. Bartolomeo
Rep. Santiago
Rep. Sharkey
Rep. Aresimowicz
Sen. Looney
Rep. Klarides
Sen. Duff
Sen. Fasano
Gov. Malloy

Lt Gov. Wyman