



State of Connecticut  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

**Testimony from Representative Russell A. Morin in Support of House Bill 5315**

An Act Concerning The Prevention Of The Habituation Of Potentially Dangerous Animals, The Post Of Informational Notices Concerning Encounters With Wildlife And The Status Of Snapping Turtles Under State Law

Environment Committee Public Hearing  
February 24, 2016

Good Afternoon Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee,

I am here to offer support of the provision House Bill 5315 that would require the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to post informational notices concerning best practices for park patrons who encounter wildlife, particularly bears.

This past summer, the state of Connecticut witnessed an incident in which a patron was approached by a black bear. Video footage and subsequent reports indicated that the patron did not necessarily exhibit appropriate behavior during the encounter. This poses a serious concern for both patrons and wildlife.

Per the National Park Service, proper protocol for any individual who encounters a bear includes the following actions:

- Remain watchful
- Do not approach it
- Do not allow the bear to approach you
- If your presence causes the bear to change its behavior (stops feeding, changes its travel direction, watches you, etc.) you are too close
- Being too close may promote aggressive behavior from the bear such as running toward you, making loud noises, or swatting the ground. The bear is demanding more space. Don't run, but slowly back away, watching the bear. Increase the distance between you and the bear. The bear will probably do the same

If the bear is persistent in following you, but is not vocalizing or paw swatting, the NPS recommends the following actions:

- Change your direction
- If the bear continues to follow you, stand your ground
- If the bear gets closer, talk loudly or shout at it
- Act aggressively to intimidate the bear
- Act together as a group if you have companions. Make yourselves look as large as possible (for example, move to higher ground)
- Throw non-food objects such as rocks at the bear
- Use a deterrent such as a stout stick
- Don't run and don't turn away from the bear
- Don't leave food for the bear; this encourages further problems

I firmly support legislation that would require signage with this type of information posted in state parks. I believe that this type of notice would not only protect those who enjoy our state parks, but it would be beneficial to the animals that have made our state's wildlife corridor their home.

I am grateful for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation and I welcome any questions.