

2/19/16

Re: The Conveyance Act, S.J. 5

Dear Representatives of the Environment Committee:

Thank you for holding a public hearing today. We write to request changes in the current way The Conveyance Act operates.

We have experienced first-hand how conveyance of public property originally planned for open space can be transferred to a private foundation for development. No municipal public hearings were held sharing what was planned; no conservation easements were added to protect environmentally fragile areas; and the public had no idea what was happening before it was too late to protest or offer protections.

The Conveyance Act transfers sections of state lands for no compensation and for non-conservation purposes. Currently, this can be done without a public hearing and through late-session amendments. This does not foster the public trust that our state representatives will protect our interests both economically and ecologically.

As you know, the creation of laws and regulations are time-consuming and deliberate. Removing protections should be equally deliberate; the words “Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes ...” negates this. Rules should not be suspended for expediency, especially those in the best interests of public health and the environment.

We respectfully ask that you:

- 1) Refrain from transferring public lands without a public hearing in the towns where those lands are located;
- 2) Exact some compensation for the transfer of state lands,
- 3) Require a higher standard than majority vote approves any conveyance; and
- 4) Ensure public lands are considered in separate bills and not bundled.

We thank you for your ongoing efforts to protect Connecticut’s environment and for holding a public hearing so citizens can voice our concerns. Only you can change these rules for the betterment of the public. We ask that you please take the necessary steps to do so.

Respectfully,

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