

2/18/16

Thank you for the opportunity to add a comment about this proposal to protect open space with a constitutional amendment. (S.J. No.5)

At the risk of seeming unoriginal I wish mainly to "second" the testimony already submitted by Mr. Dave Rauch of Meriden, CT. I don't know Mr. Rauch personally. I doubt however that I could express my support for the proposal better than he has via his testimony.

I've taken the liberty of copying key portions of his letter, below.

I wish to add a URL directing to a 12/29/15 *Hartford Courant* editorial, expressing concern about loss of Connecticut forest habitat for birds - to development - and encouraging the General Assembly to take forms of action. This proposed legislation could be a positive step toward better securing and preserving such habitat.

(URL for 12/29/15 *Courant* editorial: <http://www.courant.com/opinion/editorials/hc-ed-birds-are-leaving-20151228-story.html>)

Copy of portions of Mr. Rauch's testimony:

"...I am proud that 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 our 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 and protecting public lands is vital.

My pride in CT took a big hit when I learned of attempts to use the Conveyance Act for special interest and selfish purposes last year. The tactics that were employed had all the earmarks of the kind of back room, sneaky politics that the rest of us find so distasteful. This amendment would protect us from actions that detract from the public faith in government and make Connecticut a far less appealing place to live.

It is a very important that the General Assembly improve and pass the proposed Constitutional Amendment bill. It is a vital step to protect CT public land and promote good government.

S.J. 5 should also be improved in the following ways:

- S.J. 5 should be more comprehensive to protect lands that have agricultural, conservation, or recreational

value

- S.J. 5 should include a requirement for a local public hearing so that those most familiar can testify
- S.J. 5 should be more comprehensive to include the value of those lands being given away as well as the sale of public lands
- S.J. 5 should address the need to have separate bills considered by the General Assembly for each individual conveyance of public lands with agricultural, conservation, or recreational values to avoid bundling

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

Please vote and lobby your colleagues to improve and pass Constitutional Amendment bill (S.J. 5)

Sincerely

Dave Rauch"

Thank you for reading and considering these comments.

Signed,

Jonathan Beck
Avon, CT