

I learned of this amendment only this morning and have only 15 minutes before I must leave for work, so this will have to be brief. The brevity of the message, though, is in no way a reflection of the depth of my passion on the subject of this amendment. My life has been dedicated to the preservation of natural resources, and there are few, if any, areas of state and national interest that matter to me more. Please consider this my testimony in favor of the proposal to protect Connecticut's forest land, parks, wildlife and other open space with the constitutional amendment, subject of today's public hearing. In my adult lifetime, the world's population has doubled from 3.5 billion to over 7 billion and we are impacting the resources of our planet at a perilous level as a result. There will always be demand, for immediate gain, for the use of available resources, but we have a profound obligation to our heirs to protect the natural areas wisely left to us by our those who came before us. In Connecticut and throughout the world, species are suffering major and often irretrievable losses due to the actions of human beings. Not since the dinosaurs has there been a rate of extinction as great as it has been in just the last 200 years. It is a treasure beyond measure that we are throwing away recklessly. Connecticut must do its part to put a stop to that travesty.

I am a sixth grade science teacher. The enduring question we investigate all year is how we can be better stewards of the Earth. I am intensely aware of how our actions today will affect the future of my eleven-year-old students. I ask them what I also will ask you, do you want to tell your own children one day that, "I remember when their used to be (name any of our endangered species) in the world?" We raise Atlantic salmon do help them to understand the gravity of what is at stake. It is nothing less than our natural heritage, what sustains us all.

Please do the right thing and approve this amendment. I will be forever grateful if you do.

Polly Richter
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