



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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REPRESENTATIVE DAVID BARAM
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TESTIMONY OF REPRESENTATIVE DAVID BARAM, 15TH DISTRICT
Environment Committee Public Hearing
February 19th, 2016

Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, and distinguished members of the Environment Committee I submit this testimony for your public hearing concerning a Constitutional Amendment to protect public lands.

As you know, public lands are often acquired by purchase or referendum, gift or donation, and through existing inventory of the municipality. In each instance, there is a public expectation that such lands will remain in the public domain for preservation and recreation, or for open space and enjoyment. That intent is certainly ascertainable through the purpose of the transfer.

Nevertheless, there are repeated instances where municipalities break this public trust by selling, swapping, developing, or dividing such properties in order to promote development. In all instances however, where the intent and purpose of the acquisition were clear, these lands should be preserved in perpetuity.

Therefore, I support a Constitutional Amendment that would protect our open space and recreational lands, and prohibit any efforts to undermine the intended use and purpose manifest in such transfers to entities entrusted with its protection.

I also favor a statutory amendment to our land conveyance statutes that would create specific language to be included in any deed of conveyance that makes transfers of land to such public entities for the purpose of perpetual public use. Through such statutory language, intent would be unambiguous, and the use designated enforceable by law. While the process of a Constitutional Amendment advances forward, such statutory language could be adopted and implemented immediately.

Thank you for your consideration of this most important environmental issue.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David A. Baram". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and "A".

Representative David Baram