

To the Committee on Environment:

My name is Sidney F. Van Zandt and I live at 3 Front St., P.O. Box 9173, Groton, CT 06340. February 19, 2016

I wish to support Senate Joint Resolution No. 5.

This bill is necessary to protect the resource of each State Park. It is needed to bypass "The Conveyance Act" which gives the General Assembly the right to in essence do away with that Park. It breaks faith with our predecessors who worked hard to preserve these lands. I am one of those predecessors, as it was in the year 1963 that a group of us formed the Groton Open Space Association to Save the Haley Farm that a developer wanted to turn into 250 duplex houses. With the help of the CT Forest & Park Assoc acting as an umbrella non profit they allowed us to move forward. Haley Farm State Park was saved in 1970, and our "Battles Won" were featured in Life Magazine in July 4 of 1970.

Between 1972 and 1974 major development was projected for Bluff Point including the taking on the West side (for \$1 they said) of a wood road to put in a sewer outfall blasting its way through the bluff. Enough is enough stated Gov. Meskill and he condemned the whole peninsula. Bluff Point and the Haley Farm are joined by a RR bridge and total over 1000 acres of Open Space on the coast. In 2013 it was estimated that over 400,000 visitors spent time in those 2 parks.

SJ 5 needs to be tightened. There is a need for Local Public hearings for **any** activity. If lands with conservation or recreational values are proposed for activity they must be, THEY MUST BE included in a separate bill so as to not have it tacked onto other bills brought forward via the Conveyance Act at the end of the session. And, as written, this bill does not take into account the value of the lands being traded, sold or given away. That needs to be corrected.

Our State Parks are Connecticut's major resources. Once the land is gone, it is gone forever.

I urge you to move SJ 5 forward as a constitutional Amendment.

Thank you, Sidney F. Van Zandt