

## **Constitutional Amendment bill (S.J. 36) & Conveyance Act Testimony provided by Cate Rauch of Meriden**

Thank you for conducting this public hearing and for this opportunity to express my thoughts on the need to better protect Connecticut's public lands and to better serve the standards of good government.

I commend Connecticut's leadership for their hard work to ensure a thriving future for our state.

CT success depends in great measure on its strong appeal to attract businesses, residents and visitors who are seeking a better quality of living compared to other less desirable locales. The rich natural beauty; generally clean, healthy surroundings and easy access to outdoor recreation are very strong components of that appeal.

The CT environment is a key part of what defines life in CT and protecting it is fundamental to keeping CT attractive. My husband and I are both skilled professionals and have actively considered opportunities to relocate. It is the quality of life in CT that has kept us here and outdoor recreation and natural beauty are key parts of that.

Last summer's attempts to use the Conveyance Act were a huge disappointment. They were designed to serve very narrow and selfish purposes and relied on tactics tainted with unsavory political manipulations. Those actions detract from the public faith in government and make Connecticut a far less appealing place to live.

Any Conveyance Act measures that would diminish Connecticut Public Lands discussed in this hearing should be rejected just as the ones last year were defeated.

The proposed Constitutional Amendment is a vital step to protect CT public land. It is a very important issue which the General Assembly should address.

S.J. 36 is very good, but there are a few ways that S.J. 36 could be improved. Specifically, if a sale, transfer, or change of use for public land is proposed, then:

- Expenses associated with holding a public hearing should be borne by the proposed new landholder and not by the state agency currently holding the land in question
- Expenses associated with determining fair market value (e.g., conducting appraisals) should be borne by the proposed new landholder and not by the state agency currently holding the land in question
- The ultimate approval of fair market value should be made by the state agency holding the land in question
- Minor administrative boundary adjustments that do not diminish the conservation, open space, recreation, or agricultural purposes of the land should have a waiver process to efficiently document and exempt them.

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. 36) and to defeat any Conveyance Act measures that would diminish Connecticut Public Lands.

Sincerely

Cate Rauch

330 Columbus Ave  
Meriden, CT 06451  
203-235-3986 CateRauch@gmail.com

Cc:

Sen. Bartolomeo  
Rep. Santiago  
Rep. Sharkey  
Rep. Aresimowicz  
Sen. Looney  
Rep. Klarides  
Sen. Duff  
Sen. Fasano  
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Lt Gov. Wyman