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## Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Public Hearing Subject Matter	Position
Raised S.B. 144: AAC LAND THAT IS SUBJECT TO A CONSERVATION RESTRICTION HELD BY A NONPROFIT LAND-HOLDING ORGANIZATION	Opposed

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is the first conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. For over 120 years, CFPA has offered testimony before the General Assembly on various sustainable forestry, State Park and Forest, trail recreation, and land conservation issues.

I am testifying today to express CFPA's opposition to Raised S.B. 144, "An Act Concerning Land that is Subject to a Conservation Restriction Held by a Nonprofit Land-Holding Organization."

This bill would undo Public Act 15-211 which was signed into law to clarify that lands belonging to land trusts, whether held in fee or through a grant of a conservation restriction, are protected against being taken by adverse possession.

Raised S.B. 144 would enable a "squatter" to claim adverse possession to land protected for conservation purposes by a conservation restriction. Although the title to the land would pass to the squatter and still be subject to the conservation restriction, it would be a strange public policy twist to approve legislation that would encourage trespassing on land that is supposed to be protected. Indeed, a landowner who places a conservation restriction on their property is so committed to protection that they enable a third party (e.g., a land trust), to protect and enforce the conservation restriction against any who would trespass and/or diminish the values for which they were protected.

**Please vote against this bill**, and protect the integrity of conservation restrictions against trespassers current and future who could be emboldened to attempt to gain an ownership interest in land that should be protected in perpetuity for specific conservation purposes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am glad to respond to any questions you may have.