

Carroll, Rhonda

From: Sarah Williams <sarah7williams@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 9:22 AM
To: JudTestimony
Cc: Rep. Scanlon, Sean; DAngona, Aurora; Senator Kennedy
Subject: Testimony for 2/24 public hearing— Raised Bill 144

Co-Chair Coleman, Co-Chair Tong, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Please accept this as my testimony (for public hearing held on 2/24/16) in OPPOSITION to Raised Bill 144, AAC Land That Is Subject to a Conservation Restriction Held by A Nonprofit Land-Holding Organization.

I represent the Guilford Land Conservation Trust, the largest single town land trust in Connecticut. Supported by 1,500 members, our volunteer-run organization protects 3,000 acres, including hundreds of acres protected using conservation restrictions.

Among our concerns regarding this bill is the fact that it would expose organizations such as ours to enforcement and litigation challenges that would be punishing, time consuming and would undermine our conservation efforts.

In effect, this bill appears to support those individuals who willfully violate the property rights and interests of land trusts and conservation groups. We cannot imagine that support of such individuals is the intent of the legislature.

The lands protected by land trusts in Connecticut provide critical habitat for birds and other wildlife. Our lands connect to form important conservation corridors. Our lands protect the health of the Long Island Sound and countless other waterways. Our lands afford residents opportunities for outdoor recreation. We look to the State of Connecticut for support in our work, not senseless hurdles.

Thank you.

Sarah Williams, President
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