

March 3, 2016

State of Connecticut General Assembly  
Public Safety Committee

**RE: Testimony on Raised Bills 234 and 235**

Dear Public Safety Committee,

I am strongly opposed to the relocation of the police shooting range. I am a lifelong resident of Willington, Connecticut, a Certified Professional Soil Scientist, farmer, father, and a property owner down slope from the proposed State Police Fire Arms Training Facility on Ruby Road in Willington. The negative impacts of such a shooting range would be devastating to our property values, quality of life and have detrimental effects on the natural environment. The Connecticut State Police currently have existing ranges which have served them well over the years so I see no need to spend additional taxpayers' money, our money, on a new range developed in valuable un-fragmented forest land that should be preserved for future generations.

I support Raised Bill No. 234 requiring the state to do a full analysis of their training needs in concert with existing training facilities owned, leased and/or operated by the State Police. Options exist in other areas such as the East Haven National Guard Range to partner with other agencies to accomplish critical firearms training in a safe environment. The cost of improvements to existing training facilities is a prudent course of action at this time given the fiscal constraints of state government. The State of Connecticut has a finite amount of land that is relatively pristine, no need to destroy more when many state sites are already being used for firing range training. The state needs to take care of what they own now and manage it correctly to meet their needs, no need to waste more of **our** hard earned tax money. Real world analysis has proven that the budget for the project is severely under estimated and may be well over \$20 million to build. It is an insult to listen to the half truths and false statements put forth from our own State Department of Administrative Services regarding the proposed budget for this project.

I am opposed to Raised Bill No. 235 in its current form as it eliminates East Windsor from consideration and puts Willington in the crosshairs for the shooting facility based on an arbitrary minimum acreage. The acreage requirements need to be adjusted to prevent this from happening.

In conclusion I charge you to serve your citizens well and draft a bill to protect our quiet rural town and our cherished way of life from the negative impacts of this onerous state project, while allowing the Connecticut State Police to receive the required training they need in a fiscally prudent manner. You are our elected officials and I trust you will draft a wise piece of legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Willington, CT