

Testimony of Shirley McCarthy, MD re: S.J.5

Our public lands need much better protection. Conveyances of public lands should clearly be the exception, not the rule: it undermines our predecessors who had the foresight to preserve these lands and undermines our successors who deserve these special places in an enlarging, chaotic, urbanized future. It also wastes state and private resources to research and fight these potential losses.

Furthermore, we should not allow fragmentation and loss of state holdings that are ecologically valuable, critical to wildlife, important for outdoor recreation in a healthy setting, and necessary for viable farming.

Public lands with agricultural, conservation, or recreational values should not be given away, sold, traded, or have their uses changed. If this cannot be prevented, then there should at least be a local public hearing in the town or towns where the public lands are located, there should be a higher standard than a simple majority vote (better a 2/3 majority vote) to approve a public lands conveyance, and it should only be considered in separate bills so that bad proposals are not bundled with good ones.

Please protect our public lands both for humans and non human living things!! Thank you.