



Connecticut Chapter
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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Government Administration and Elections Committee
March 14, 2016
Testimony in Opposition to
HB 5619 AA Conveying Certain Parcels of State Land and
Requiring a Study of Certain State Real Property

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

The Sierra Club strongly opposes Section 8 of the bill, which would transfer 66.5 acres of waterfront land in the custody of DEEP to Groton for essentially unspecified purposes. “Economic development, recreational and open space purposes” could cover most anything.

We oppose this, not because we are certain this transfer is not in the public interest, but because we do not know if it is, and the conveyance bill process is unlikely to tell us. We know that from many years of experience with conveyance bills where the proposed bill itself lacks the critically important information. Where the hearing process, held in Hartford but not in the district of the parcel, is confounded with many other bills on the agenda. Where the bill itself proposes the transfer of many parcels in addition to the one in question. Where the bill has never once, ever, either started in, nor been sent to the committee of cognizance overseeing the custodial agency. The conveyance bill has never, ever, had a vote in the Environment Committee, even though many of the parcels in question were in the custody of DEP/DEEP.

Because the process is so flawed, we cannot support transfer of any property of significant open space or environmental significance, regardless of the recipient, until it is fixed. See additionally our testimony for Senate Joint Resolution 36 before this committee.

Most important here, more so than any other consideration, is the Public Interest. To proceed, any process must guarantee that the Public Interest is protected and prioritized. The conveyance process does not yet do that. Let’s resolve to fix it, then proceed. Is this a new message for 2016? Hardly. We said it loud and clear in 2011 when the Haddam land swap passed, and every year since.