

Constitutional Amendment bill (S.J. 36) & Conveyance Act Testimony provided by Dave Rauch of Meriden

Thank you for this opportunity to express my thoughts on the need to better protect Connecticut's public lands and to better serve the standards of good government by holding this public hearing.

Connecticut's future success requires hard work now and I am happy to see Connecticut's leadership addressing this Constitutional Amendment bill and other important issues.

I am proud that we have a state that many feel is a great place to live, do business and visit. Connecticut's rich natural beauty; generally clean, healthy surroundings and easy access to outdoor recreation are very strong components of our appeal. The CT environment is a key part of what defines life in CT and protecting it is fundamental to keeping CT attractive.

There is much discussion about less expensive states to retire. We plan to retire in CT because it is a nice home. Like any other home, it needs investment and attention to remain a nice place to live.

Fiscal prudence for CT requires that we maintain our strong appeal. And that appeal includes a highly enjoyable great outdoors and protecting public lands is vital.

My pride in CT took a big hit when I learned of attempts to use the Conveyance Act for special interest and selfish purposes last year. The tactics that were employed had all the earmarks of the kind of back room, sneaky politics that the rest of us find so distasteful. This amendment would protect us from actions that detract from the public faith in government and make Connecticut a far less appealing place to live.

Any Conveyance Act measures that would diminish Connecticut Public Lands discussed in this hearing should be rejected just as the ones last year were defeated.

It is a very important that the General Assembly improve and pass the proposed Constitutional Amendment bill. It is a vital step to protect CT public land and promote good government.

S.J. 36 is very good, but there are a few ways that S.J. 36 could be improved. Specifically, if a sale, transfer, or change of use for public land is proposed, then:

- Expenses associated with holding a public hearing should be borne by the proposed new landholder and not by the state agency currently holding the land in question
- Expenses associated with determining fair market value (e.g., conducting appraisals) should be borne by the proposed new landholder and not by the state agency currently holding the land in question
- The ultimate approval of fair market value should be made by the state agency holding the land in question
- Minor administrative boundary adjustments that do not diminish the conservation, open space, recreation, or agricultural purposes of the land should have a waiver process to efficiently document and exempt them.

Fiscal prudence for CT requires that we maintain our strong appeal. And that appeal includes a highly enjoyable great outdoors.

Please vote and lobby your colleagues to improve and pass Constitutional Amendment bill (S.J. 36) and to defeat any Conveyance Act measures that would diminish Connecticut Public Lands.

Sincerely

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Cc:

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Rep. Santiago  
Rep. Sharkey  
Rep. Aresimowicz  
Sen. Looney  
Rep. Klarides  
Sen. Duff  
Sen. Fasano  
Gov. Malloy  
Lt Gov. Wyman