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May 2, 2016

Senator Clark J. Chapin, Co-Chair
Representative Brian Becker, Co-Chair
Regulations Review Committee, Room 011
State Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Regulation 2016-002: State Parks - Parking Fees

Dear Senator Chapin and Representative Becker:

Pursuant to section 4-170 of the Connecticut General Statutes, I submit for your re-consideration and approval the enclosed proposal to amend the Department's regulation concerning the fee charged for vehicle parking at Connecticut State Parks. This proposal is a resubmission of the regulations that were previously considered at your April, 2016 meeting, where the regulation was "rejected without prejudice". At the meeting, members of the Committee observed that there was active consideration of legislation that would repeal the imposition of sales tax on parking fees, making these regulations unnecessary. It was stated that the House of Representatives had recently approved House Bill 5627 by a unanimous vote, and that additional time was needed to determine if a repeal of the sales tax would become law this year.

If such a repeal of the sales tax on parking at state parks does not take place, we urge the Committee to pass this regulatory proposal which is intended to simplify the collection of applicable parking fees at Connecticut State Parks where a parking fee is charged. Approval of this regulation at your May meeting will allow us time to adjust our fees prior to the busy Memorial Day weekend. As background, the state budget approved last session (Section 75 of PA 15-244), included a new provision that requires the collection of sales tax for parking fees at state parks. The addition of sales tax to the parking fees resulted in the need for all cash transactions to include coins, for the first time. This added significantly to the transaction times for visitors, and to the logistical support needed for our parks' cash handling operations. This proposal would "round up" the parking fees to the next whole dollar, and be inclusive of the sales tax, as a way to speed transactions, and limit the traffic back-ups that can occur at our park entrances. The proposed regulation also makes technical and conforming changes to the existing regulation.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, and if there are any questions regarding this proposal, please contact Rob LaFrance, the Department's Legislative Liaison, at (860) 424-3401 or Tom Tyler, Director of Connecticut State Parks at (860) 424-3099. Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Susan K. Whalen".

Susan K. Whalen, Deputy Commissioner