Good Day,

This is submission of testimony in favor of Senate Bill #605 that calls for a moratorium on the DEEP project at Silver Sands State Park. I’ve been following this story with interest as my wife and I are regular users of the park. I first became closely acquainted with the park in 1990 when I lived in Milford and started volunteering at the Milford Animal Shelter. In those days there were all sorts of nefarious characters hanging out in the parking area, drinking, doing drugs and who knows what else. I recall that at the time there were huge chunks of asphalt and concrete on the beach itself and garbage was common. It was a real mess and it felt a bit scary and unsafe. The State of CT project that restored the area back to its natural state was nothing short of amazing and with the addition of the boardwalk it has become a beautiful destination for people from CT and beyond. While I do have a couple of issues about the park (illegal dogs and bikes on the boardwalk) it has been and continues to be a go to place for me. It is also one of the premier birding areas in the state and is a true CT treasure.

The list of “improvements” from the DEEP are at best not well thought out and at worst a hopeful money grab that could actually lose money for the state. While a building with some bathrooms would be nice it seems that the porta pottys that are adjacent to the parking area now are adequate. The addition of a food concession is not needed, there’s ice cream, usually a food truck or 2, a few restaurants and a bakery at the Walnut Beach end of the park. Additionally a food concession would inevitably mean more trash in the park. The worst idea is building kiosks to start collecting entry fees to enter the park. DEEP seems to be of the mindset of “build it and they will come”. My guess is that folks that have been using the area for free for many years aren’t going to be flocking in when they have to pay to enter. It’s unlikely in the extreme that more people will use the park after the “improvements”. I haven’t even brought up the cost factor yet. Considering the fiscal conditions in CT and the Governor’s proposed budget with cutbacks pretty much across the board it seems very foolish to go forward with this project. The capital bond funds that are available for the project could be used for ongoing maintenance, of Silver Sands and other parks. Spending $10 million on this project seems very short sighted to me. The hearing with DEEP last year made it very plain that virtually nobody in the area wants this project to happen. The city of Milford is against the project as are the State Senator and State Representatives from both sides of the aisle. Silver Sands is fine as is. If it ain’t broke don’t fix it. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely
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