



# Salem Land Trust



www.salemlandtrust.org

P.O. Box 2133, Salem, CT 06420

## **Salem Land Trust Testimony in Support of HB 6926 at the Planning and Development Committee Public Hearing Feb. 15, 2017**

Thank you for raising HB 6926, a bill to promote land conservation and stewardship at the local level. The Salem Land Trust actively pursues land conservation and stewardship, and like many local and regional land trusts in Connecticut, it works with many partners, including federal and State agencies, foundations and private donors.

Often, the partner is a municipality, working with a land trust to meet the local goals of the State and local Plans of Conservation and Development. Invariably these plans include the need for protecting our natural resources, our farms, special habitats and the beautiful natural areas found in each municipality.

Municipal partnership in funding conservation, however, has become increasingly difficult in CT due to the extreme pressure on towns and cities to cut budgets and lower property taxes. Without a new source of revenue, communities often put off land protection until too late. Once developed and degraded, natural areas are never fully restored.

**Many communities in neighboring states** have been allowed to pay for land conservation and stewardship by means of a local conveyance fee dedicated to these goals. **The results have been astonishing:** hundreds of millions of dollars raised and tens of thousands of acres of land have been conserved, including habitats for many endangered and threatened species. Realtors report higher land values in communities with the fee, and there is strong public support for the conservation it provides.

**Thus HB 6926 offers a proven game-changer for land conservation,** and also for community health and beauty, clean air and water, native biodiversity, resilience against climate change, and the economy.

The Salem Land Trust joins with the hundreds of other CT conservation organizations and officials who wish to work together to enhance the value of our local communities by supporting HB 6926. **Please allow**

The Salem Land Trust is dedicated to conserving for future generations  
the area's beauty, rural character and natural diversity.  
A non-profit 501(c)(3) organization



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**our municipalities, if they so choose, to have this strong tool for achieving our mutual conservation goals. Thank you.**

David Bingham, Salem, CT.

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