



**CONNECTICUT LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION VOTERS**

February 14, 2017

To: The Honorable Co-Chairs and Members of the Planning and Development Committee
From: Lori Brown, Executive Director of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

Re: HB 6926

Dear Senator Cassano, Senator Logan, Representative Lemar and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **IN SUPPORT of House Bill 6926** An Act Permitting Municipalities to Impose a Buyer's Fee on the Conveyance of Real Property.

Connecticut needs to preserve open space and provide adequate stewardship of parcels that have already been acquired. Yet the cost of doing so often falls to local city and town governments, most of which have designated other funding priorities for their strained budgets. HB 6926 has been introduced to allow municipalities the "local option" of establishing and collecting revenue for the dedicated purpose of bolstering open space acquisition and maintenance.

The "local option" is a limited conveyance or buyer's fee on the transfer of real property or the purchase of residential real estate. The revenue generated by this fee would provide a dedicated local funding source for land conservation, including farmland, forests, and open space, as well as land stewardship, in both rural and urban communities.

In other states, municipalities and counties that have such a dedicated conveyance fee for land preservation have found that **local real estate land values have been enhanced by these programs**. Moreover, such programs tend to generate significant **matching grants that double or triple the land protection funding** in their communities.

It should be noted that the **legislation being considered does NOT require municipalities to adopt the local option**, it simply enables them



to establish such a revenue source if they so desire. Any city or town that opts to establish the fee, must first pass an ordinance in compliance with their local governmental procedures.

It is also important to understand that the legislation, as currently proposed, includes protections for first-time home buyers and low-income individuals by exempting purchases of \$150,000 or less from the new fee.

Municipalities do not currently have the right to impose the needed conveyance fee without State approval. The Connecticut General Assembly **must pass legislation to give cities and towns permission to adopt such an option** through their local ordinances.

We ask that you support this legislation and empower the local authorities of Connecticut's extremely diverse towns and cities with the ability to actively pursue preservation of open space if they agree that it is a priority for their community.

Please VOTE TO SUPPORT HB 6926.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lori Brown
CTLCV
553 Farmington Avenue, Suite 201
Hartford, CT 06105
www.ctlcv.org
ctlcv@ctlcv.org