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Public Hearing – February 15, 2017
Planning and Development Committee
Testimony Submitted by State Representative Joseph P. Gresko

**H.B. 6926 – AN ACT PERMITTING MUNICIPALITIES TO IMPOSE A BUYER'S FEE ON THE
CONVEYANCE OF REAL PROPERTY.**

To permit municipalities to impose a conveyance fee on certain real property sales in order to generate funds for the purchase, preservation and stewardship of open space.

Good afternoon, Chairman Lemar and Chairman Cassano and Chairman Logan, Ranking Members, Vice Chairs and members. My name is Joe Gresko and I'm the state representative from the 121st district in Stratford.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony supporting House Bill No. 6926

HB 6926 is enabling legislation for a local option to purchase and steward open space. This legislation would provide another tool in local communities' tool box to preserve and protect open space in local communities across the state at a time when dollars for these projects are scarce.

In Stratford, for example, we've just submitted an application to the state's open space and watershed division to help acquire available open space abutting our town's own forest. This parcel has been targeted for development and it would be useful if we had the ability to bolster Stratford's own open space fund.

The proposed legislation is an opt-in proposal, allowing local communities in our state to harness a dedicated and replenishing revenue stream to protect and steward open space properties and parkland. This local source of revenue can also be leveraged with state and federal grants for the purchase of land in local communities.

Please empower communities across Connecticut to fund local conservation efforts and preserve the natural beauty and character of our rural, urban and suburban landscape. The land is an important resource that defines that character of our community and will be there for generations.

Thank you.