



# Audubon CONNECTICUT

February 14, 2017

**Re: In Support of House Bill 6926, “An Act Permitting Municipalities to Impose a Buyer’s Fee on the Conveyance of Real Property”**

Dear Chairman Lemar, Cassano, Logan and Members of the Planning & Development Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Audubon Connecticut, the state office of the National Audubon Society in support of House Bill (HB) 6926. Audubon Connecticut provides education and conservation programs across the state, If enacted, this legislation would increase support for the preservation and protection of open space and parkland across our State.

HB 6926 provides another tool in the toolbox for towns and cities in Connecticut to invest in their community. Essentially, it provides a local option for towns and cities to impose a fee of up to 1% on the purchase of residential real estate to create a local fund that supports open space acquisition and stewardship. Again, this is a local option—not a mandate on CT municipalities.

As you know, protecting open space is difficult with limited funding from state and federal sources. Open space and parks preserve the character of Connecticut cities and towns but once open space is gone, it is gone forever. Enacting HB 6926 will help to maintain and enhance sustainable communities and increase local investments. It will help protect open space that has already been acquired. It is essential for local communities who want to harness a dedicated and replenishing revenue stream to protect and steward open space.

Please empower and enable 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 communities and will be there for generations to come.

I have attached case studies of areas that have achieved success from the enactment of a local option –in Warwick, NY; the Peconic Bay region, Long Island, NY; New Shoreham (Block Island), RI; Radnor, PA; and Jefferson County, WV. HB 6926 can provide for similar outcomes in land conservation and stewardship success in towns and cities throughout Connecticut.

Thank you in advance for your support for this legislation, and for encouraging its passage.

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