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Testimony on Senate Bill Nos. 429, 338, 449, and 424
Environment Committee
Submitted by James Sirch, President
Hamden Land Conservation Trust
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Senator Kennedy, Senator Miner, Representative Demicco, Ranking Member Harding, and Members of the Environment Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony regarding the following Committee bills: **Senate Bill No. 429: An Act Concerning the Passport to the Parks(SB 429) (Support); Senate Bill No. 338: An Act Concerning the Use of CIA Account Funds for Combatting Invasive Species (SB 338) (Oppose); Senate Bill No. 449: An Act Concerning The Disposition Of The Former Seaside Sanatorium Facility (SB 449) (Oppose); and Senate Bill No. 424: An Act Authorizing Bonding for Bikeways, Greenways and Recreational Trails (SB 424) (Support)**

HLCT supports SB429 This new program generates much needed revenues to support operation and maintenance of our State Parks, and establishing a non-lapsing, dedicated fund free from dilution is vital for the critical funds needed for upkeep, hiring seasonal staff and more.

HLCT opposes SB338 Although combatting invasive species is very important to maintain biodiversity in the state, funds should not be taken from the already underfunded Open Space, Watershed and Land Acquisition Program. State land conservation goals already set are not being met, and taking further funds from this important fund will not help. Local funds from municipalities should be used instead.

HLCT opposes SB449 Seaside State Park, a 34-acre gem located on Long Island Sound, already has a master plan set in place for protection and as a destination for CT and U.S. citizens, and selling off this property is not in the public interest. When this property is gone, there is no going back.

HLCT supports SB424 There is already a \$10 million backlog in bonding for grant requests for the CT Trails and Greenways Program. Many projects have been completed with this important matching public/private program, and taking away funds will have a future negative effect on the health and well-being of CT citizens through lack of recreational opportunities.

On behalf of the Hamden Land Conservation Trust, thanks for this opportunity to provide comments.