OLR Bill Analysis
sSB 237

AN ACT DESIGNATING YORK HILL AS A PROTECTED TRAPROCK RIDGE.

SUMMARY

By designating York Hill as a “traprock ridge,” this bill authorizes (1) the Town of Hamden to regulate development in York Hill’s ridgeline setback area (CGS § 8-2) and (2) Hamden’s plan of conservation and development to include recommendations for conserving and preserving York Hill (CGS § 8-23).

By law, municipalities with a designated traprock ridge may, in their zoning regulations, restrict development in ridgeline setback areas (see BACKGROUND).

The law allows the zoning regulations to restrict development (i.e., construction, reconstruction, alteration, or expansion) of structures other than (1) facilities, such as power lines, regulated by the Connecticut Siting Council and (2) relatively slender structures, such as chimneys and utility poles. The regulations may restrict quarrying and clearcutting. But existing law requires that the following be permitted “as of right” in the setback areas: (1) emergency work to protect life or property; (2) nonconforming uses approved before the regulation was adopted; and (3) selective timbering, grazing, and passive recreation (CGS § 8-2(c)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

BACKGROUND

Ridgeline Setback Area

By law, the ridgeline is the 50-foot or longer horizontal segment of the crest where the surface is composed of basalt as identified on a U.S. Geological Survey map and where the crest has a 50% or steeper slope.
A ridgeline’s setback is the area bounded by (1) a line that parallels the ridgeline at a distance of 150 feet on its more wooded side and (2) the contour line on its rockier side where the slope is less than 50% for at least 50 feet.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea  21   Nay  7   (03/18/2019)