



www.branfordlandtrust.org

April 28, 2019

CT General Assembly

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Dear Committee Members,

I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Branford Land Trust. I strongly oppose Section 1 of SB 1137 and Section 5 of SB 1138 which will require Connecticut land trusts to pay a property tax into a state community development account.

The Branford Land Trust is over 50 years old, runs completely on the efforts of volunteers and members, and has strong ties to the town government, the local business community, and our neighbors and fellow residents.

A healthy and viable Connecticut shoreline is absolutely essential for its continued residential, commercial, and recreational use. These proposals will force us to divert resources, raised by donations and memberships, from their intended purpose: preservation and protection of open space on the CT shoreline. They will penalize our land trust for our stewardship efforts to set aside funds to secure our long-term viability and to care for our land trust's properties and easements in perpetuity pursuant to best management practices as put forth in the Land Trust Alliance's "Land Trust Standards and Practices." Finally, these proposals will undermine our relationships with existing and future donors who want their donations to support land conservation and not fund a state tax.

I urge you to Vote No on these short-sighted proposals to levy a tax on Connecticut's land trusts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Watson'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Watson

Board member, Branford Land Trust