



# ROXBURY LAND TRUST

Since 1970

April 28, 2019

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Dear Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

Thank you for your work on behalf of the people of Connecticut. Today, I write to voice Roxbury Land Trust's (RLT) opposition to Section 1 of SB 1137 and Section 5 of SB 1138. Both these bills would require nonprofits, including land trusts, with "significant" savings accounts, endowments or pension funds to pay into a state "community development account" the equivalent of 25% property tax.

RLT conserves over 3,800 acres of land in perpetuity in the towns of Roxbury, Woodbury, New Milford and Bridgewater. With over 30 miles of trails, RLT opens its lands at no cost to the public for passive recreation, environmental education, and research partnerships with CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Connecticut Agricultural Extension Center (CAES).

RLT receives no municipal, state, or federal money and relies on limited grants and the generosity of donors. These individuals trust that their donations will be used consistent with our mission which includes protecting open space, farms, wetlands and watercourses. Any bequests received often specify that the funds can only be used for a specific purpose. As an accredited land trust, we strictly adhere to their wishes.

This proposal would add a financial burden on our non-profit organization and divert critical resources from our land trust's ability to acquire, steward, and manage open spaces, farms, and other natural resources that benefit our quality of life and local economy. It would penalize our land trust for our efforts to set aside funds to help secure our organization's long-term viability and to care for our land trust's properties and easements in perpetuity pursuant to best management practices (The Land Trust Alliance Standards & Practices). This proposal would also undermine relationships with donors who want their donations to support land conservation and not a state tax.

Please vote NO on these proposals that would tax land trusts.

Thank you,

Ann Astarita