



## Naromi Land Trust, Inc.

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April 28, 2019

Dear Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

I am the Executive Director of Naromi Land Trust in Sherman, CT. I strongly **oppose** Section 1 of SB 1137 and Section 5 of SB 1138, both of which 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.

This proposal would divert critical resources from our land trust's ability to acquire and manage open spaces 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 Standards & Practices). This proposal would also undermine relationships with donors who want their donations to support land conservation and not a state tax.

Naromi Land Trust, founded in 1968, protects over 1,500 acres of land with significant conservation value in the town of Sherman. These properties provide critical and invaluable ecosystem services including protecting drinking water, offering agricultural fields, and conserving habitat for endangered species.

Besides 1 full-time and 1 part-time employee, the critical work of land conservation in Sherman is conducted by a fully volunteer board. Naromi receives no funding from the town budget and relies on a mix of private donations and grants. Land trusts are committed to protecting these holdings in perpetuity requiring sound fiscal investments of these limited funds. These proposals would limit the capacity of conservation organizations, threatening our ability to care for land entrusted to us for the benefit of future generations.

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

Sincerely,



Amanda Branson

Executive Director, Naromi Land Trust