

Dear Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

I am a board member of the Heritage Land Preservation Trust of Torrington. 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.

Heritage Land Preservation Trust has acquired over 600 acres in the Northwest Ct area. Of these acres we have created gardens for senior citizens of Torrington.

We have created trails for those that love to hike. Trails that are used almost every day in the Spring, Summer and Fall.

A neighborhood park in Downtown Torrington. Complete with benches, tables, perennial gardens and a beautiful view of a pond. A wildlife sanctuary for ducks, geese, heron, egret, eagles and fox and mink.

Acres of land that were donated by citizens wishing to have their properties protected **in perpetuity**.

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.

This bill 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. Indeed, one of the biggest economic benefits of protected land is that it avoids the need for infrastructure and other costly municipal services associated with developed land.

This bill would do just the opposite of what you are seeking. Most, if not all trusts are made up of people that wish to save the land in its original state. Where do they get the funds? Grants are available if you can obtain them. Many use their own money.

Here's a question - if this bill passes, which non-profit will be next? In Torrington alone there is over 175 non-profit organizations! To name a few:

Community Health & Wellness Center of Greater Torrington

Goodwill Super Store

TORRINGTON LIBRARY

TORRINGTON HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRUST INC

MARIA SEYMOUR BROOKER MEMORIAL INC

TORRINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF NORTHWEST CT INC

TORRINGFORD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT INC

CHARLOTTE HUNGERFORD HOSPITAL

MCCALL FOUNDATION INC

THE CENTER FOR CANCER CARE FUND INC

BURRVILLE AND DRAKEVILLE FIRE DEPTS.

This is just a few.

Which ones will be next on the list?

Think about this. If they have no funds, the Land Trusts will fold. Land donated to trusts generally comes with a statement that buildings cannot be erected. The property must stay in its original state. So what do you gain? No taxes, no money, no useable property. And now all our gains are thrown away.

This proposal would add a financial burden on our organization, 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. We should not be taxed for trying to do the right things.

Sincerely, Jim Febroriello

Heritage Land Preservation Trust.