

Dear Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

I am a board member of the Litchfield (CT) Land Trust, former president and present chairman of its Governance Committee. 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.

Litchfield Land Trust's preserves serve the public good by creating and maintaining dozens of miles of trails through forest, riverside and mountaintop, for anyone to walk; and the Litchfield Community Gardens, free to anyone to cultivate on an annual basis. Our practices of land conservation have preserved Litchfield's natural resources and landscape, significantly contributing to the town's desirability as a place to live.

This proposal would penalize LLT 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 undermine relationships with donors who want their donations to support land conservation and not a state tax. It is likely that, if passed, this proposal would make it impossible for LLT, which recently celebrated its 50 anniversary, to survive to its 60th.

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

Sincerely,  
Richard Heys, Litchfield resident  
Litchfield Land Trust, Litchfield, CT