

*Dear Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,*

*I am a member of Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust. 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.*

*Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust stewards 2300 acres in Woodbury and Middlebury. In addition to managing the land, we maintain trails in several of our preserves which are heavily used by walkers and bikers. We operate a Nature Center that educates thousands of students, campers and adults annually about nature and the importance of the environment for our future well being. We could not provide these services to the community without our endowment. The State of CT could not achieve its goals for open space without the thousands of acres preserved by our land trusts.*

*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.*

*The annual draw from Flanders' endowment provides nearly a quarter of Flanders' operating budget. Without these funds we could not meet the accreditation requirements to maintain our acres, provide recreational space for area residents, and educate our youth and adults on nature.*

*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.*

*Sincerely,*

*Ingrid Manning*