



The Woodbridge Land Trust

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April 28, 2019

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Connecticut General Assembly

Re: Section 1 of SB1137 and Section 5 of SB1138

Dear Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

I am the President of the Woodbridge Land Trust, an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization. The Woodbridge Land Trust 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.

The Woodbridge Land Trust offers educational lectures and guided trail walks that are open to the public at no cost. We engage in conservation and scientific projects, including partnering with The American Chestnut Foundation to reestablish disease-resistant chestnut trees into our forests. The Trust receives no corporate donations and is largely funded by small (under \$100) donations from conservation-minded individuals who value open space preservation and who have placed their faith in us to honor our commitment to protect, conserve and preserve open space.

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 Woodbridge Land Trust recently acquired 12 acres of open space with the help of a generous donor who wanted to protect the land permanently. Without the ability to earmark his donation to acquire the property, the Land Trust would not have been able to accept his donation because the Trust does not have the financial resources to pay the tax as proposed by this legislation. This legislation will effectively bankrupt nonprofit

land trusts like ours by depleting cash reserves and thereby bringing to a halt efforts to acquire and maintain open space and to fulfill other aspects of our core mission to engage in education, scientific and conservation work. In other words, 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bryan H. Pines".

Bryan H. Pines, D.M.D.
President

cc:
CT Rep. Themis Klarides
CT State Senator George Logan

BHP/cca