

Dear Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

I am writing as Executive Director of Weantinog Heritage Land Trust, Connecticut's largest land trust conserving 10,300 acres in Litchfield and Fairfield Counties, to 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.

These proposals would divert essential resources from our land trust's ability to protect in perpetuity natural and working lands that benefit Connecticut's quality of life and economy. It would penalize our land trust for our efforts to set aside funds to help secure our organization's long-term sustainability and to care for our land trust's properties and easements in perpetuity pursuant to best management practices (Land Trust Standards & Practices). These proposals would also undermine relationships with donors who want their donations to support land conservation and not a state tax.

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

Sincerely,

CATHERINE M. RAWSON, J.D., M.E.M.
Executive Director
Weantinog Heritage Land Trust, Inc.