Bill No.: SB-1123
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PARCELS OF STATE LAND IN THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE.
Vote Date: 5/13/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 4/29/2019

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:
This bill requires DOT to convey three parcels totaling 48.07 acres at administrative costs to the Town of Cheshire for economic development purposes.

Joint Favorable Substitute LCO No. 8518-adds reverter to state if parcels not sold for economic development within five years, requires that such sale be for fair market value and that the funds received be transferred to the Treasurer for deposit in the Special Transportation Fund

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Joe Giuletti, Commissioner, Department of Transportation: The Department is opposed to this bill as written. All properties suitable for economic development should remain with the state until disposed of in accordance with CGS 13a-80 as all revenue from the sales of DOT property are deposited in the State Transportation Fund for a match against federal funds for other transportation projects. If the town desires to use the property for economic development, the Department recommends amending the bill to require the town pay fair market value plus administrative fees. Further, the bill states that if the Town sells or leases the property or uses it for another purpose it will revert to the state. This contradicts the economic development use required by the act.

Melissa McCaw, Secretary, State of Connecticut office of Policy and Management: OPM opposes this bill as written; see also DOT’s testimony. A similar conveyance request was proposed in last year’s bill and was removed from the conveyance bill as the property is
deemed to be too valuable to convey for administrative costs. The town’s assessor has these three parcels, consisting of 48.07 acres, valued at $3,117,371. Additionally, the language is contradictory as the use is for economic development purposes, however, the property cannot be leased or sold or else it will revert to the state. OPM recommends selling the subject property either to the town, or any other interested party, for fair market value established by two independent appraisals.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

**Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association:** We would recommend that all conveyances follow the process of going through the State Properties Review Board and any other administrative steps that are currently in place or developed in the future. These functions provide valuable oversight, consistency, and transparency. Additionally, we recommend that the intended use for the conveyed land be disclosed along with its assessed or appraised value. Transparency in this process protects the state’s assets and the citizens who may be impacted in a particular community. Finally, while it is not our core mission, we do have serious concerns with transferring state assets of significant appraised value out of public ownership without a clearly articulated benefit to the state.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

**Patrick Comins, Executive Director, Connecticut Audubon:** Connecticut Audubon and Audubon Connecticut submit this joint testimony on Senate Bill No. 1123. We believe this proposed conveyance is the same property that was proposed to be included in the 2018 Conveyance Act.

**Margaret Miner, Executive Director, Rivers Alliance:** This bill would convey more than 43 DOT acres to the Town of Cheshire for unspecified economic development. Most of the conveyance is in the NW corner of the South Central Regional Water Authority’s North Cheshire aquifer area. Also, it appears that a small portion is in the Southington Water Department’s Well 2 Aquifer Protection Area. A stream runs through the conveyance area, linking the two aquifer-protection zones, and then to the Quinnipiac River. About a quarter of the parcel appears to be wetlands.

**Reported by:** Nicholas Rogers  
Committee Clerk  
**Date:** 5/14/19