

Dear Representative Borer, Senator Cohen, members of the Environment Committee,

May I respectfully request that you support HB 6441 providing municipalities funding for climate adaptation and resilience projects, as per recommendations from the Governor's Council on Climate Change.

Newington has very little open space, it is currently 94% privately owned housing and businesses. If the pandemic has shown us anything, the explosion of use of the state parks and forests show the urgent need for open space, hiking and biking trails are a real necessity and a health benefit.

There are two parcels of land in Newington that combined would make an excellent open space and/or forested park.

One such parcel is Cedar Mountain, (just off Cedar Street in Newington) presently owned in part by the Balf Corporation, some by the town and some by MDC.

The other parcel is the old and now abandoned state property of Cedarcrest Hospital which adjoins Cedar Mountain.

Cedarcrest is only a liability, there has to be a constant 24 X 7 X 365 guard to prevent vandalism, other than that Cedarcrest no longer has any point to remain as a state owned property.

The buildings are old, decrepit and contaminated with asbestos, unusable for any conceivable purpose. The state would be wise to raise these ruins, remove the contaminated remains and cede the land as a state park or a town park.

Section 3 of the bill provides municipalities an option to establish a buyer's conveyance fee to fund land stewardship, climate resilience, and other environmental projects in our community.

The buildings are just a tax on future generations, some time in the future, they'll have to go, and the removal of them only gets more costly as time goes on.

HB 6441 is an opt-in program, and costs the state nothing. Please support HB 6441 and give Newington the opportunity to decide whether to establish this funding program.

Sincerely,

David Wemett