

CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill Nos. 7417 - 7423 and Senate Bill Nos. 1123 - 1128
Government Administration and Elections Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Esq., Executive Director
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Co-Chairs Fox and Flexer, Vice-Chairs Haskell and Winkler, Ranking Members France and Sampson, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

On behalf of CLCC, we thank you for this opportunity to present testimony regarding House Bill Nos. 7417 - 7423 and Senate Bill Nos. 1123 - 1128 - collectively "Land Conveyance Bills". We are especially appreciative to participate in this year's Conveyance Act public hearing pursuant to the new process put in place through the 2018 Constitutional Amendment (Question #2).

We offer the following comments with respect to the Land Conveyance Bills:

State Properties Review Board (SPRB) oversight: We recommend that all proposed conveyances be subject to review by the SPRB to "ensure that transactions are done in a prudent, business-like manner, that costs are reasonable, and that proposals are in compliance with State laws, regulations and procedures."^[1] All but two of the proposed conveyances (HB 7420 and 7422) are subject to review by the SPRB.

Description and details regarding intended use: It would be helpful if each bill included details regarding the intended use of the property. This is especially important when a property is currently undeveloped and may contain valuable natural resources which will require special protections from proposed development activities. For example, SB 1123 proposes the conveyance of over 47 acres of land in Cheshire for "economic development" purposes. We have been told that there are extensive wetlands on the property and that most of the land area is within Aquifer Protection Areas. Knowing the nature and extent of the proposed economic development activity would be very helpful in evaluating whether conditions should be added to address the potential impacts of the proposal on the surrounding environment.

Understanding how consideration for the conveyance is determined: It would also be helpful for the public to understand why some properties are proposed for sale for fair market value when others are being conveyed for administrative costs or for no consideration at all. These insights are especially important during these challenging economic times in our state.

We thank you again for the opportunity to provide these comments and are happy to answer any questions you may have.

^[1]<https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/State-Properties-Review-Board/State-Properties-Review-Board-Meeting-and-Member-Information>

