

CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

Comments on House Bill No. 5214
Environment Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director
February 28, 2024

Co-Chairs Lopes and Gresko, Vice-Chairs Hochadel and Palm, Ranking Members Harding and Callahan, and members of the Environment Committee:

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) is the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its ~120 land trusts. CLCC is a 501(c)(3) organization operating statewide. Our mission is to elevate and strengthen land conservation in Connecticut. CLCC envisions a future where every Connecticut community is supported and sustained by a diverse mix of conserved land, and land conservation is embraced as an essential community value.

Thank you for this opportunity to present general comments regarding **House Bill No. 5214, An Act Concerning Batterson Park** to care for, maintain, and operate Batterson Park.

Batterson Park is a public park owned by the City of Hartford. It is located outside the city limits within the nearby towns of New Britain and Farmington, making it an important regional asset. It includes a large pond with a state-managed boat launch. If approved, the plan would authorize the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the city of Hartford, and Riverfront Recapture to enter into a memorandum of understanding for the care, maintenance, and operation of Batterson Park by Riverfront Recapture with funding through the Passport to Parks program.

Investments in Batterson Park will breathe new life into the park at a time when the public's demand for access to open space continues to grow. They will also build upon the state's efforts to address the significant inequities not only in where parks and greenspaces are located but also in the associated health inequities for people living in our urban areas with the highest poverty rates. In addition to providing opportunities to access nature for outdoor recreation, urban parks, and forests can improve air and water quality, mitigate the heat island effect, reduce flooding, shield people from ultraviolet radiation, and mitigate against other harmful effects of the changing climate.

I understand that essential stakeholders are involved while the full vision for this park's revitalization is finalized. We support this effort and will continue monitoring that process as it progresses.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments and for all you do. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

