

C O N N E C T I C U T
Land Conservation Council

December 9, 2022

Sent via email: Dennis.McDonald@ct.gov

Dennis J. McDonald, Supervising Property Agent
Connecticut Department of Transportation, Division of Rights of Way
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06113

Re: Proposed land transfer by the Department of Transportation: Property Consisting of Four
Parcels along the Easterly side of Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street in North Canaan

Dear Mr. McDonald,

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) is the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its ~130 land trusts. We advocate for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and work to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

CLCC respectfully submits these comments to join other conservation organizations in raising concerns about the above reference proposed land transfer which was brought to our attention through the Council on Environmental Quality Environmental Monitor. The property is described as a 27.45-acre property, consisting of four parcels, located at Ashley Falls Road and North Elm Street (Route 7) in North Canaan.

The property has also been described as undeveloped and having significant conservation value for its wetlands and watercourses, as well as forestland habitat - including areas of core forest which are large forest blocks important for wildlife habitat, drinking water supply protection, and ecological resilience. The property is located at the headwaters of Camp Brook (a tributary of the Blackberry River) and within a 100-year flood zone. In addition to its conservation value, it is our understanding that the land was part of the North Canaan Greenway, providing opportunities for public outdoor recreation.

The [Governor's Council on Climate Change \(GC3\) Phase 1 Report: Near-Term Actions January 2021](#) (GC3 Report) recognizes that our state's forestlands, natural areas, and working lands are among our strongest defenses against the impacts of climate change. The benefits of these natural climate solutions to public health, the economy, and environment include protecting



biodiversity, reducing the risks and impacts of flooding, filtering pollutants from the air, and absorbing and storing carbon. Further, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 23-8(b), the state has set a goal of conserving 21% of its land area as open space – a goal it is not nearly on target to meet. (See [CEQ 2021 Annual Report](#))

Conveying land of such high conservation value – particularly without any restrictions on its end use – is contrary to the state’s efforts to mitigate against the impacts of climate change and to achieve its land conservation goals. We urge the agency to reconsider this proposed transfer and repurpose the property for permanent land conservation through CT DEEP or a local land trust or other conservation organization.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Amy Blaymore Paterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amy" being the most prominent.

Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director