

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

General Comments on Senate Bill No. 193

Environment Committee

Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director

March 8, 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.

Thank you for this opportunity to present general comments regarding **Senate Bill No. 193, An Act Requiring Legislative Approval Of The Eviction Of Farmers Operating On Certain State-Owned Property**, which seeks to require legislative approval of the eviction of any farmer leasing property from either the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) or the Department of Agriculture (DoAg).

While we need further insights into the specifics of the matter(s) driving this proposal, as an organization committed to land conservation and sustainable agricultural practices, we are generally concerned that this proposed legislation could negatively affect farmers and the management of state-owned properties.

DEEP and DoAg possess the necessary expertise to evaluate the properties subject to the leasehold and make informed decisions based on the unique facts and circumstances of each case. Shifting this administrative responsibility to the legislature could hinder the efficient management of state-owned properties and compromise the effectiveness of environmental restrictions and agricultural policies. Requiring legislative approval for evictions could undermine the flexibility needed to respond promptly to changing circumstances and ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of both farmers and the broader community.

We urge this Committee to consider alternative solutions that preserve the administrative oversight and expertise of our state agencies while safeguarding farmers' interests and promoting sustainable land management practices. CLCC is happy to assist in that effort.

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.

