

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill No. 5400
Environment Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director
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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 ~130 land trusts. We advocate for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and work to ensure the long-term strength and viability of Connecticut's land conservation community.

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in support of **House Bill No. 5400, An Act Concerning the Preservation of Stone Walls in the State.**

From the perspective of a land trust, when land is conserved it protects not only the ecological values of the property but also its history and cultural resources. Oftentimes the historical significance of land is captured in stories shared by landowners – passed on from generation to generation. It may also be observed visually on the landscape through buildings, objects, structures and others with scientific, historic and cultural value.

Stone walls are classic examples of these important cultural resources that provide a glimpse into the historic relationship between people and the land. There are thousands of miles of stone walls meandering through New England, some dating back to as early as 1600. Whether on private or public land, and irrespective of the conservation status of that land, stone walls are an important part of Connecticut's heritage and history, and should be protected.

Recognizing the challenges with enforcement, CLCC supports HB 5400 which would impose fines and liability for damages on any person dismantling a stone wall without the written authorization of the owner.

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.

