

CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill No. 5324, Section 7
Transportation Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Esq., Executive Director
Connecticut Land Conservation Council
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Co-Chairs Leone and Lemar, Vice-Chairs Kasser and Simms, Ranking Members Martin and Devlin, and Members of the Transportation Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council in support of **House Bill No. 5324 (HB 5324), An Act Concerning Pedestrian Safety At Crosswalks, Speed Limits In Municipalities, Fines And Charges For Certain Violations And The Greenways Commemorative Account. We are focusing our testimony on Section 7 of the bill regarding the establishment and purpose of a greenways commemorative account (“Greenways Account”).** We thank the Transportation Committee for raising this bill.

As the state’s umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its 137+/- land trusts, 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.

CLCC is committed to supporting the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection greenways programs which serve to support state, regional, and local projects that, *inter alia*, protect natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources; offer opportunities for recreation and nonmotorized transportation; and connect and provide access to existing open spaces.

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 14-21i, funds collected by the state from the greenways license plate program are placed into the general fund for the limited purpose of raising public awareness of the importance of greenways. The amendment proposed by Section 7 (a) of HB 5324 would strengthen this section and enhance its efficacy by expanding the use of the revenue to actually fund state and local projects that preserve, restore and protect greenways. To that end, we contend that the funds generated by the greenways license plate program should support the purposes in C.G.S. Section 23-100 -103, including the state’s greenways capital grant programs and bikeway, pedestrian walkway, recreational trail and greenway grant program, respectively.

HB 5324 Section 7 further strengthens the current greenways license plate program by establishing a nonlapsing Greenways Account – an account that would not be tied to the timing of the state’s fiscal year. While this is a most welcome improvement, we contend that to best ensure that the license plate program revenue is used for its intended purposes, the Greenways Account be established as a separate dedicated account outside of the general fund.

On behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, I thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

