



PROTECT STATE-OWNED PUBLIC LANDS

GOAL FOR 2017 SESSION

The Connecticut State Legislature is being asked to support the **reintroduction and passage of Resolution Act 16-1**, “A Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of the State to Protect Real Property Held or Controlled by the State.” This resolution passed in the 2016 session (as Senate Joint Resolution 36) and must now be passed a second time to allow the public to vote on this important referendum question in 2018. This Resolution **would amend the state constitution to require that State-owned public lands must receive a public hearing and a two-thirds vote before being given away, swapped, or sold by an act of the General Assembly.**

WHY MUST WE PROTECT STATE-OWNED PUBLIC LANDS?

It is critical that Connecticut have a more public process for selling, swapping, or giving away public lands. Many of these lands were donated to the state by families and individuals with the expectation that their generous gifts would benefit the public. A public process is an important way to ensure that the history of the land and donor intent be considered.

Public lands are important to protect air and water quality, provide wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, and serve as demonstration areas for positive land management. A public process helps to consider what values could be lost, and how potential losses would be mitigated or avoided.

Public land is one of the best investments we have made in Connecticut over the past 100 years. State Parks and Forests attract over 8 million visitors, generate over \$1 billion, and support over 9,000 jobs every year. As with Hammonasset Beach and Talcott Mountain, these lands draw tourists, increase home values, improve public health, harbor wildlife, and both attract and keep businesses in Connecticut. Public lands that provide these and other benefits should not be given away without due consideration and public input. Our state may be in fiscal crisis now, but thoughtful protection of public lands should help the economy rebound.

In our region, Maine, Massachusetts, and New York constitutions already include similar protections for public lands. It is important to note that **this constitutional amendment would not change the existing statutory processes that allow State agencies to administratively transfer public lands or convey surplus lands.** These processes are well-summarized on the CT Council on Environmental Quality website on the page entitled “Guide to the State Lands Transfer Process.”

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PROTECT STATE-OWNED PUBLIC LANDS *continued*

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NOW?

A more public process for selling, swapping, or giving away public lands will ensure that Connecticut is **honoring land donors, preserving benefits, protecting valuable assets, securing state investments, and providing places for everyone to enjoy.**

Given all the values to Connecticut that our public lands harbor, it is **appropriate and reasonable to better protect these lands through a constitutionally-secured, public process.** The legislature must pass Resolution Act 16-1 this year.

Administrative Process	Conveyance Act	Constitutional Amendment
<p>State agency gets written approval from OPM</p> <p>State agency informs the municipality at least 6 months in advance of sale or exchange.</p> <p>OPM notifies other state agencies which have 30 days to present a plan for use of that state land.</p> <p>OPM holds public meeting in municipality where land is located.</p> <p>After public meeting and consideration of public comments, OPM determines whether state land can be sold or exchanged.</p> <p>Municipality receiving the land has 120 days to accept conveyance. Period can be extended by 60 days.</p> <p>If the municipality has declined a conveyance, DAS may sell, exchange, or lease or enter into agreements with other options.</p> <p>Approval by State Properties Review Board.</p> <p>General Assembly has up to 30 days to vote on conveyance.</p>	<p>Private developer, municipality, or other entity proposes a swap, sale, or other conveyance to their Legislator(s).</p> <p>Legislator uses GAE form to request a conveyance.</p> <p>Proposed conveyance included in conveyance act.</p> <p>GAE holds public hearing with ~5 days notice.</p> <p>Amendments can be offered up to the end of session without any public hearing.</p> <p>Conveyance act is voted by simple majority in both chambers.</p>	<p>Private developer, municipality, or other entity proposes a swap, sale, or other conveyance to their Legislator(s).</p> <p>Legislator uses GAE form to request a conveyance.</p> <p>Proposed conveyance would be a separate bill.</p> <p>Public hearing required by committee of cognizance.</p> <p>Vote by 2/3 majority of each chamber.</p>

For more information please contact:

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