

THE PROBLEM

Connecticut's parks support thousands of jobs and a thriving outdoor recreation industry that generates billions in revenue. To support this crucial part of Connecticut's economy and way of life, the General Assembly passed the Passport to Parks in 2017, funded by a \$5 per year fee paid through motorized vehicle registrations.

Because of Passport to Parks, our campgrounds and trails were open, well-maintained, and free of charge to all Connecticut residents.

Despite the popularity of the new Passport and increased attendance at State Parks, a diversion of \$300,000 in Passport to Parks funds was proposed in 2019. Fortunately this diversion was not included in the final FY 2020-2021 budget.

Before the Passport was initiated for state residents in 2018, chronic funding cuts had led the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to close four campgrounds and cut back hours at most facilities in 2016-2017. Those campgrounds are now re-opened and services have been restored thanks to Passport to Parks.

A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

The General Assembly should ensure that Passport to Parks funds remain dedicated to maintaining parks rather than being diverted. Additionally, legislators should oppose proposals to exempt any user groups from the Passport to Parks fee.

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the Passport to Parks program, contact:

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FAST FACTS

- Connecticut's State Parks generate over **\$1 billion** in revenue for our state each year..
- More than **9,000 private sector jobs** in Connecticut are supported by our State Parks.
- According to a UConn economic study, **10 million people** visited State Parks in 2019 (with 10% increases in attendance in both 2018 and 2019).