



TESTIMONY **IN OPPOSITION** OF **HB 5456**  
AN ACT CONCERNING EXEMPTIONS TO THE PASSPORT TO THE PARKS FEE  
FOR SENIORS, VETERANS AND CERTAIN VEHICLE OWNERS

March 10, 2020

**To:** Honored Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Demicco and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

**From:** Lori Brown, Executive Director, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **IN OPPOSITION** of **HB 5456** to exempt senior citizens, disabled veterans, and certain vehicle owners from the Passport to the Parks motor vehicle registration fee.

Connecticut's state parks support thousands of jobs and a thriving outdoor recreation industry that generates over **\$1 billion in revenue annually**. The Passport to Parks fee allows free access to clean, well-maintained parks to Connecticut residents. In past year, when Connecticut did not fund the Passport to Parks program, campgrounds and parks had to be closed.

**More than 50% of revenue from the Passport to Parks program would be lost if we exempted these user groups.** That is unacceptable. A 2016 study published in the Journal of Park and Recreation Administration showed that people who get outside and enjoy nature are happier and healthier. It is vital to our residents wellbeing and future prosperity.

In addition, the Passport to Parks works! According to a UConn economic study, **10 million people visited state parks in 2019**, with 10% increases in attendance in both 2018 and 2019. In addition, our state parks **support 9,000 private sector jobs**. We cannot afford to lose these jobs.

We at CTLCV urge the committee to **OPPOSE any exemptions to the Passport to the Parks fee**. Thank you for your consideration as you deliberate on this bill.

Sincerely,

Lori Brown  
Executive Director  
CTLCV

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