

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill No. 5308
Environment Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Esq., Executive Director
Connecticut Land Conservation Council
February 15, 2019

Co-Chairs Cohen and Demicco, Vice-Chairs Gresko and Kushner, Ranking Members Harding and Miner, and members of the Environment Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council in support of House Bill No. 5308, An Act Concerning Vegetation Management Along State Highways by the Department of Transportation. (HB 5308)

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.

Connecticut's land trusts work hard to ensure they are following best practices when it comes to the stewardship and management of lands they were entrusted to protect. Adopting management plans, as well as policies and procedures to guide the development of the same, help land trusts implement their vision for the property and better protect the land and conservation values.

There is an expectation by the public that state land management should be equally comprehensive and disciplined.

To that end, HB 5308 would bring better planning to CT Department of Transportation (DoT) vegetation management, including especially tree removals, along state highways. In particular, HB 5308 requires DoT to develop vegetation management guidelines that include consideration of, *inter alia*, environmental, public safety, and scenic impacts of management activities. The bill also provides for review and reporting requirements with respect to tree removal and other vegetation management activities which will add much needed transparency and accountability for the benefit of the public.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments.

