



State of Connecticut

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February 22, 2021
Appropriations Committee

Testimony Regarding House Bill 6439: AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Co-Chairs Osten and Walker; Vice Chairs Hartley, Dathan, and Nolan; and distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 6439: **AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

I serve as Representative for the town of Voluntown which is home to the Pachaug State Forest. The forest and other state land make up nearly 70% of the town's total land area. The assessed full property value the State of Connecticut owns in Voluntown is nearly \$29 million; however, Voluntown only receives \$175,000 in PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) payments from the state annually. Furthermore, the Town of Voluntown is heavily relied on to respond to medical and fire emergencies in the forest and state lands and the town's taxpayers are shouldering this heavy burden to help protect statewide residents who are visiting. Specifically, during the spring, summer and autumn months, Voluntown first responders (all of whom are volunteers) are handling a high volume of calls, most of which, are happening on state land on and around Beach Pond. There have been numerous calls/complaints regarding dangerous and irresponsible watercraft usage incidents, rescues and fires being set around the pond whose burden continues to be placed on Voluntown and its very limited resources. In brief, the town is providing a tremendous service and financial sacrifice and is not being reimbursed equitably or appropriately. Additionally, with the state owning such a large amount of the town's landmass, Voluntown's ability to grow its grand list is nearly impossible since there is such a limited amount of land left to do so with.

I am strongly supporting First Selectman Hanson's request in her submitted testimony (see submitted testimony) that's requesting revisions to include all state-owned land be assessed at full value as opposed to the rate included in PA 490. Additionally, municipalities with more than 50% state owned real property should be reimbursed at least 50%.

Thank you for your consideration, the First Selectman and I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to ensure the language in HB 6439 is fair and meaningful to Voluntown.