



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Executive Director

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

February x, 2025

Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management
c/o Paul F. Hinsch
Office of Policy and Management, Bureau of Assets Management
450 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106-1379
paul.hinsch@ct.gov

Re: Proposed Land Transfer in Sprague (0 Bushnell Hollow Road. Map 13, Block 4, Lot 1)

Dear Mr. Hinsch,

The Council on Environmental Quality (Council) notes that the Department of Transportation (DOT) is proposing to transfer an approximately 47-acre property, comprised of four vacant wooded parcels, located south of Bushnell Hollow Road along the Shetucket River in Sprague. The property is identified as undeveloped wooded land with ponds, streams, other water, or wetlands. In addition, the property is noted as being “landlocked with no legal access” and subject to a Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Flood Management Certificate, which might restrict construction on the parcels due to its location in a mapped flood zone. The Council’s review of the property using DEEP’s spatial data confirms this information, and indicates that the property is located within an area designated as forestland habitat, which also serves as a carbon sink and to stabilize the soil; is within a Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) buffer area, indicating the potential presence of state-listed species; and a portion of the property is identified as “floodplain forest” on the critical habitat data layer.

Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Section 23-8(b) establishes a goal of “twenty-one per cent of the state’s land area shall be held as open space land.” However, based on the Council’s independent review, a total of approximately 566,900 acres or 84 percent of the total statewide goal of 673,210 acres has been preserved to date. The Council recommends that DEEP review the 47-acre property noted above to determine if the state should retain the parcels as open space, given the unique environmental attributes of the 47-acre property and the state’s goal to preserve open space land. Should the state decide not to retain the parcels as open space, the Council strongly recommends including restrictions on the management and use of the parcels that would retain the unique environmental attributes and undeveloped nature of the property.

Thank you for your consideration of the Council’s comments.

Sincerely,

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

c. Melanie A. Fadoir, Supervising Property Agent, CT DOT, Division of Rights of Way (Melanie.Fadoir@ct.gov)
Lindsay Suhr, Director, DEEP Office of Land Acquisition and Management (Lindsay.Suhr@ct.gov)