



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

October 14, 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 Newington (525 Russell Rd, Newington, CT)

Dear Mr. Hinsch,

On September 3, 2013, a land transfer notice¹ for two parcels, with a total area of approximately 88 acres, at 525 Russell Road in Newington and 300 Russell Road in Wethersfield was published in the *Environmental Monitor*. On October 22, 2013, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) published a notice² in the *Environmental Monitor* with draft recommendations for the protection of identified natural resources located on a portion of the subject property. Specifically, DEEP indicated that “the area of the traprock ridge that has not yet been developed and the area directly adjacent to the nesting Peregrine Falcon should be protected through a conservation easement. The area that should be subject to preservation has been identified on the attached map as the Preservation Parcel” (see attached letter and map). Further, DEEP recommended that “the subject area be protected through transfer to the Town or a non-profit conservation organization with a conservation easement provided to the Department.” On April 8, 2014, DEEP published an additional notice in the *Environmental Monitor*³ with a final recommendation (see attached) reaffirming “that a portion of the Cedarcrest Hospital property be preserved through a conservation easement.”

While the most recent land transfer notice for the property at 525 Russell Road in Newington, published September 16, 2025,⁴ indicates that only approximately 28 acres of the approximately 53.5 acre parcel might be transferred, it is not clear from the maps of Parcel A if the entire “Preservation Parcel” has or will be preserved or if a portion of the preservation parcel is included in the proposed land transfer.⁵ And while the notice states that the proposed land transfer “excludes the cottages in the Town of Newington”, there is no mention of the “Preservation Parcel”.

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

an 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. It has been the long-standing policy of the Council on Environmental Quality (Council) to strongly encourage state agencies to consider placing surplus state land or such portion of the state land being transferred, as may be suitable, into conservation either by transferring the land to a land conservation organization or by placing a conservation easement on the land. The reasoning for the Council's policy is that such transfers and/or conservation easements better protect environmental resources and help the State of Connecticut meet its open space goals in a cost-effective manner. And in this case, the need for conservation of the "Preservation Parcel" is heightened by the potential presence of state-listed species and habitat "essential to protection of Connecticut's species of greatest conservation need."

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Paul Aresta
Executive Director

Attachments (2)

- c. Thomas Pysh, Administrator, Statewide Leasing and Property Transfer (Thomas.Pysh@ct.gov)
Lindsay Suhr, Director, DEEP Office of Land Acquisition and Management (Lindsay.Suhr@ct.gov)

¹ Notice of Proposed Land Transfer, Newington and Wethersfield, September 3, 2013; <https://portal.ct.gov/ceq/environmental-monitor/environmental-monitor-archives/2013/september-3-2013#State>

² Recommendation of the Commissioner of Energy & Environmental Protection Regarding a Proposed State Land Transfer in Newington (Step III), October 22, 2013; <https://portal.ct.gov/ceq/environmental-monitor/environmental-monitor-archives/2013/october-22-2013#State>

³ Final Recommendation of the Commissioner of Energy & Environmental Protection Regarding a Proposed State Land Transfer in Newington (Step III), March 14, 2014; <https://portal.ct.gov/ceq/environmental-monitor/environmental-monitor-archives/2014/april-8-2014#State>

⁴ Notice of Proposed Land Transfer in Newington, September 16, 2025; <https://portal.ct.gov/ceq/environmental-monitor/environmental-monitor-archives/2025/september-16-2025>

⁵ The Preservation Parcel would be in addition to the approximately 10-acre parcel that was transferred to the Town of Newington in 2019, consistent with the provisions of Public Act 18-154; <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2018/act/pa/pdf/2018PA-00154-R00SB-00502-PA.pdf>.