



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Keith Ainsworth
Acting Chair

Timothy J. Bishop

Linda Bowers

Christopher Donnelly

Cinzia Lettieri

Aimee Petras

Denise Rodosevich

William Warzecha

Paul Aresta
Executive Director

March 12, 2026

Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Lopes and Rep. Parker, Vice Chairs Sen. Hochadel and Rep. Bumgardner, Ranking Members Sen. Harding and Rep. Callahan, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

Re: Raised Bill No. 454 - An Act Concerning Park Replacement by Municipalities –
Support

The Council on Environmental Quality (Council) is a nine-member board that works to assess the condition of Connecticut's environment and report its findings to the Governor; recommend actions to improve state environmental programs; advise state agencies on environmental impacts of proposed projects; and investigate citizens' complaints of violations of environmental laws.

The Council strongly **supports** Raised Bill 454 that clarifies and strengthens the provision of Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-131n that would require municipalities that take, convert, or repurpose park or open space lands to provide comparable replacement land. Recently, a few courts have interpreted the word “take” in the statute to mean “take by eminent domain”, thereby limiting its applicability. The taking of parks and open space by eminent domain is extremely rare, while the conversion of parks to other uses is and has been the more likely occurrence. All parks should be replaced regardless of the mechanism (e.g., eminent domain, conversion, or repurposing) used to place the park into an alternative use. Now more than ever, parks and open space are vital to the health of a community. Parks and open space provide shade to help cool the public in extreme heat, capture flood waters in extreme rain events, protect the carbon sink/oxygen-generating benefits of trees and grasslands, and lower temperatures in nearby neighborhoods.

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

Sincerely,

Paul Aresta
Executive Director