

Dawn Huntley

From: Cindy Elder <cindyelder@blct.org>
Sent: Sunday, June 15, 2025 7:19 PM
To: House Municipal Government and Housing Committee; Kate Sayles; Jennifer Smith Boylan; paul@paulroselli.com
Subject: Re: Burrillville Land Trust - House Bill 6283

Dear Committee on Housing and Municipal Government,

I'm writing with a clarification of my position on House Bill 6283. Please replace my prior statement with this statement. We are opposed to the bill and believe it will threaten the long-term efforts of nonprofit land trusts to preserve land for future generations.

The nonprofit Burrillville Land Trust has been steadfastly preserving conservation land for 25 years through a sustained volunteer effort. I am aware of their work through my association with them as a member of the Rhode Island Land Trust Council, where they have a reputation for excellence and understanding of the complex issues involving land preservation.

As the executive director of a small one-town land trust with only one half-time employee, I recognize the critical role played by volunteers. I'm sure this is true for the Burrillville Land Trust. Volunteers contribute on every level of our organization, from the most senior board positions to the adult and student volunteers who maintain trails, manage our properties, conduct programs, and contribute specialized skills. Our programs are free and open to the public, and we assist the town in maintaining town-owned open space. Thousands of hours of volunteer time make this possible, which results in a tremendous tax savings to town residents. We frequently hear from town leaders that they do not have the manpower to take on additional land stewardship tasks, and they are grateful for our support and collaboration.

The Barrington Land Conservation Trust was founded in 1979 - 46 years ago. The Burrillville Land Trust is now in its 25th year. It's not easy to raise the funds and the volunteers to keep these important organizations vital. When an organization has a track record of success, we should celebrate and support that.

Nonprofit land trusts are in the forever business: they preserve land now so that it can be held in trust for future generations. This is critical not only for passive outdoor recreation, but for wildlife corridors, pollinator habitats, and the health of the natural resources upon which we humans depend. Nonprofit land trusts have a degree of separation from the political concerns of the moment which enables them to take a long view on preservation.

Decades from now, the people of Burrillville will likely be grateful that a group of volunteers had the foresight and determination to preserve and care for our dwindling natural open spaces.

I encourage you to not to take any action that would threaten the ability of the Burrillville Land Trust to continue its exemplary work.

Best wishes,

Cindy Elder
Executive Director



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Your gift preserves precious open space in Barrington for generations to come.