

Thank you Rep. Lamar, Sen. Haskell, Ranking Members Rep. Carney and Sen. Somers.

Thank you for your time and this opportunity to share some concerns with SB-169, ACCESS TO PARKING NEAR PUBLIC BEACHES AND RECREATIONAL AND SCENIC AREAS.

I understand the intent of this bill is to ensure all CT residents can equitably access state-owned land and I agree completely that no resident should be priced out of a day at the beach with their family just because they do not live in a coastal community. However, saying that parking fees must be the same for non-residents as residents denies the reality that coastal community-tax-payers disproportionately fund the maintenance, upkeep, and stewardship of these state-owned properties.

In looking at several towns' policies on this issue, I actually believe that Fairfield is a model of how to equitably price beach parking. Currently, anyone can purchase a season's pass to park at Fairfield's beaches from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The town does not limit the number of non-resident passes it sells. While the non-resident pass rate is higher than the resident rate, it is not egregiously so. If a non-resident came to the beach once a week during the pass window, the average cost per visit would be less than \$17. Additionally, Fairfield already charges the same day rate for both residents and non-residents. Lastly, Fairfield has a train station that is walkable to the beach and the town does not charge for walk-ons.

As I hope you can see, Fairfield has not abused its privilege of having access to so many of the state's beautiful beaches. It has, what I, and I believe others, would argue is a fair and equitable approach that balances access to our beaches for both residents as well as non-residents. The proposal as currently written would disrupt this balance in the favor of non-residents and leave Fairfield residents on the hook for an estimated additional \$1.2M to maintain our 6 public beaches. I think this would be unfairly burdensome and not reflective of the work the town puts in to care for and maintain the beaches.

Also, as currently written, I am worried that lines 5-7, which state no municipality shall "restrict access to parking spaces or parking facilities near a public entrance to a public beach, recreational area or scenic area to visitors who are residents of such municipality," poses a safety concern. Fairfield's beach neighborhood is an extremely densely populated and congested neighborhood. If the town were not able to limit street parking outside the entrance to the beach it would have a severely negative impact on the safety of the neighborhood and ability for pedestrians and cyclists to safely navigate the neighborhood. It also doesn't seem fair to say residents cannot have exclusive rights to park in front of their own homes. The streets are narrow and we have several streets that do not allow any street parking and most others that only allow single side of the street parking. I respectfully request you consider allowing municipalities to control any street parking that is in front of residential homes.

Thank you for this opportunity to share some thoughts and concerns on this proposal. I very much appreciate your time and thoughtful consideration of my testimony.