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Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Public Hearing Subject Matter	Position
<b>Raised Bill 5429:</b> AN ACT CONCERNING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, VISION ZERO COUNCIL, SPEED LIMITS IN MUNICIPALITIES, FINES AND CHARGES FOR CERTAIN VIOLATIONS, THE GREENWAYS COMMEMORATIVE ACCOUNT AND MAINTENANCE WORK ZONE AND SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY ENFORCEMENT.	Support

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is the first nonprofit conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. For over 125 years, CFPA has offered testimony before the General Assembly on various State Park and Forest, trail recreation, sustainable forestry, and land conservation issues.

CFPA supports H.B. 5429: An Act Concerning Pedestrian Safety, Vision Zero Council, Speed Limits in Municipalities, Fines and Charges for Certain Violations, the Greenways Commemorative Account and Maintenance Work Zone and School Zone Safety Enforcement.

We thank the Committee for raising this comprehensive bill with so many important safety provisions. Our testimony is focused on Section 15 of the bill which would establish a greenways commemorative account as a nonlapsing fund and clarify its purpose.

There is certainly precedent for better protecting funds generated by a commemorative license plate to ensure they are dedicated to their intended purpose. This was done successfully for the Long Island Sound license plate in 2009 (Section 14-21e of the CT General Statutes).

For years, CFPA and other advocates for Greenways have heard rumors that the funds collected from the Greenways commemorative plates were not being appropriately dedicated to purposes that support Greenways and were essentially vanishing into the General Fund. Your action to ensure these funds are appropriately dedicated in a nonlapsing fund should put these rumors to rest, and will hopefully result in more citizens purchasing Greenways plates to support funding for the recreational trails and greenways that are being so heavily used by the public.

Thank you for raising this important bill, and I hope you will continue to strongly support it through the process. I am glad to respond to any questions you may have.