

# Constitutional Amendment Ballot Initiative ALERT

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Dear Friends of Groton's Environment,

This November 6, you have a chance to vote for the first ever state-wide initiative related to Connecticut's environment. **If it passes with enough "yes" votes**, our state-owned public lands would be protected from being sold, swapped, or given away by the Connecticut General Assembly without the appropriate public input.

**Vote YES on Ballot Initiative #2 to strengthen existing protections for public lands threatened with being handed over for development.**

***Why is this Constitutional Amendment Ballot Initiative so important to Connecticut?***

Ballot Initiative #2 corrects a [long-standing threat to our public lands](#). At

present, the legislature can turn over or convey any piece of state-owned public land to a local municipality or a private developer without any public process: no public hearing at either the state legislature or in the town where the transfer will occur. Indeed, many acres of public lands have been transferred using this loophole. While state agencies have specific requirements for selling, swapping, or giving away land under their purview, the General Assembly does not.

Furthermore, under the Constitutional Amendment, if the land proposed for sale or swap is held by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection or the Department of Agriculture, the legislature must pass the transfer by a 2/3 majority. We will discuss this section in our next alert to you.

### ***Why is this Ballot Initiative especially important for Groton?***

We need to take the long view on protecting Groton's valuable open space. For instance, at present the General Assembly could sell off or give away all or some portion of Bluff Point or Haley Farm State Parks by a majority vote as part of a "[conveyance bill](#)" without a word to the public. This is too improbable, one might say. Yet, given present politics, anything could happen in the long run. Twice, in Groton alone, legislative efforts were made to transfer the valuable Mystic Education Center (Oral School) property to the Town of Groton with no public process. Click [here](#) for more examples state-wide.

Many environmental groups have worked hard and successfully to get the proposed Constitutional Amendment through the legislature twice, as required by law. **Now it is up to us to put it over the top in the November 6 election.**

**This is a critical moment in the progress of environmental protection in the State of Connecticut. Please VOTE YES on Question #2 on the November 6 ballot!**

### **Ballot Question Text:**

"Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to require (1) a public hearing and the enactment of legislation limited in subject matter to the transfer, sale or disposition of state-owned or state-controlled real property or interests in real property in order for the General Assembly to require a state agency to sell, transfer or dispose of any real property or interest in real property that is under

the custody or control of the agency, and (2) if such property is under the custody or control of the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, that such enactment of legislation be passed by a two-thirds vote of the total membership of each house of the General Assembly?”

As always, thank you so much for your commitment to our environment!

Liz Raisbeck and Eugenia Villagra

Co-Chairs, Groton Conservation Advocates

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