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SENT VIA EMAIL and REGULAR FIRST CLASS MAIL

Governor Dannel P. Malloy
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Commissioner Melody A. Currey (melody.currey@ct.gov)
State of CT Department of Administrative Services
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Commissioner Dora B. Schriro (dora.schriro@ct.gov)
State of CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection
1111 Country Club Road
Middletown, CT 06457

Colonel George F. Battle (george.battle@ct.gov)
State of CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection
1111 Country Club Road
Middletown, CT 06457

Dear Governor Malloy, Commissioner Currey, Commissioner Schriro and
Colonel Battle:

I represent Sharon Viadella, Susan and Michael Lane, Pamela Patalano and the group, *Save Pachaug Forest*, concerning the proposed State Police Gun Range in Pachaug State Forest. As you know, this proposal has generated significant opposition not only in the Towns of Griswold and Voluntown, but throughout all of Eastern Connecticut.

On October 3rd, I sent a letter to Colonel Battle, requesting a meeting with Senator Somers and the leadership of the Connecticut State Police to discuss this proposal and the concerns raised by residents, and to offer constructive suggestions regarding appropriate alternate locations. I have received no response.

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Next week, the State of Connecticut will elect a new Governor and a new General Assembly. Both Mr. Stefanowski and Mr. Lamont have publicly opposed the acquisition of the property in question and the construction of this expensive facility at a time of unparalleled financial hardship for Connecticut. Based upon the actions of the current administration, I fully anticipate efforts to expedite this purchase shortly after the election and before the new Governor is sworn into office in January of 2019.

Accordingly, before Cohen & Wolf, P.C. commences litigation seeking injunctive relief, I hereby formally request that the Office of Governor, Department of Administrative Services, Department of Emergency Management and Public Protection, and Connecticut State Police cease and desist any and all further action concerning the purchase of the property in Griswold until a new administration is seated in January.

On March 6, 2018, Congressman Joe Courtney articulated significant and justifiable reasons that call into question this proposed acquisition and construction. Congressman Courtney recommended that an independent entity *not involved* in the selection of the Griswold site perform a third party assessment of appropriate site locations throughout Connecticut. We agree with Congressman Courtney. There are several red flags which call into question the decision-making in this process and the appropriateness of the purchase of this property in Griswold. Our concerns are as follows:

1. The proposed Griswold location is remote to the rest of the State of Connecticut, just minutes from the Rhode Island border. If the Department of Emergency Management and Public Protection and State Police Headquarters are both centrally located, then a facility used to train the 900 plus men and women of the Connecticut State Police should also be centrally located.
2. At a time when the next Governor and General Assembly will face a projected 5 billion dollar budget deficit, in addition to pension and healthcare liabilities among the most underfunded in the nation, how can state government in good conscience justify this type of expense? On March 6, 2018, Secretary Barnes indicated that “[b]ond funding for the firearms training facility has been authorized in various years and is within the Governor’s Biennial Budget for those years . . . \$2,876,000 remains in bond authorizations” for the firearms training facility. Given the monumental budget deficit the next Governor will face, the outgoing administration should not encumber its successor with a significant future cost. Options should be left on the table to mitigate the budget deficit.

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3. The fiscal year normally starts on July 1st, yet our state government did not adopt a budget until October of 2017. During this budget process, municipalities throughout Connecticut adopted budgets and set mil rates, uncertain as to whether supplemental tax bills would have to be sent to cover shortfalls from the State of Connecticut. Recommendations that did not pass but caused tremendous stress to local municipalities included outright elimination of municipal and educational aid and a proposal to defer one-third of pension costs to municipalities, among many other proposals. This would have caused significant property tax increases. With such draconian proposals offered to mitigate budget shortfalls and an expectation that the next budget cycle will be even more challenging, the State of Connecticut cannot justify the payment of \$1.1 million for property that has been appraised at a little over \$400,000.
4. The proposed training facility is isolated from 70% of the other State Police Barracks that would use the facility (specifically Troop A: Southbury, Troop B: Canaan, Troop F: Westbrook, Troop G: Bridgeport, Troop H: Hartford, Troop I: Bethany, Troop L: Litchfield, as well as CSP Headquarters in Middletown). Because the facility is not centrally located, it would require significant overtime for officers to properly train, traveling to and from this remote location.
5. The State of Connecticut cannot justify constructing an expensive, multimillion dollar facility at a time when the Connecticut State Police are woefully understaffed. Eight years ago, there were roughly 1,200 state troopers. Today, there are just over 900. Over the next three years, several hundred will be eligible for retirement. Before the State of Connecticut expends millions for the acquisition and construction of this facility, the Commissioner and the Colonel should explain the significant staffing reductions over the last eight years and what succession plan, if any, has been developed to deal with this sizable number of retirements. The Department of Emergency Management and Public Protection would be hard pressed to justify the outlay of several million dollars on a training facility if the Connecticut State Police will not have adequate staffing levels to actually use and train at the Griswold facility.
6. At a time when the administration is proposing spending millions in acquisition costs for this facility, there exists over 100 acres Meriden already owned by the State of Connecticut. This location would not require additional acquisition costs encumbered by the State. Given that the site is centrally located, it would also reduce the police overtime costs of troopers traveling to and from the facility to conduct their training.

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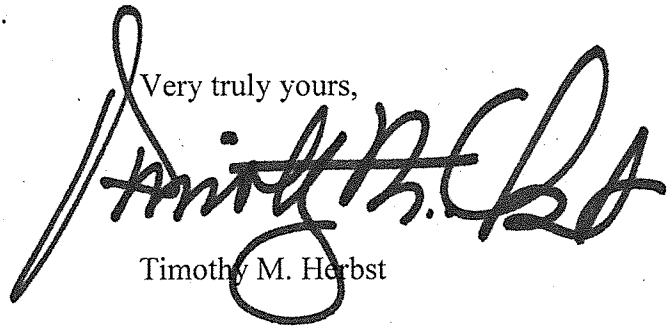
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7. At the Meriden site, utilities already service the parcel from the street, the right-of-ways on the property are already serviced by the utility companies, and the pre-existing structures on the site have already been torn down.
8. There would be virtually no residential impact that is incompatible with the proposed gun range and training facility at the Meriden location. The site is adjacent to a large state park and surrounded by 300 foot plus cliffs on the downrange side (north), a state park to the west, I-691 to the south, and commercially zoned property to the east. There are not any residential areas bordering the site and there is a minimal amount on the far outskirts which would help to abate any public opposition. The site is secluded from the surroundings with wooded barriers in all directions. It is significant to note that Meriden has a firing range for the municipal police academy. This is a use that already exists in the area without serious objection.

I respectfully request that the relevant state agencies involved with the purchase and development of this property in Griswold respond to this letter within the next week. In the interests of protecting our clients and guaranteeing that a new administration will have the opportunity to properly evaluate this proposal, my firm reserves the right to seek any and all relief to prevent further action from taking place.

I trust you will reply promptly.

Very truly yours,



Timothy M. Herbst

cc: Congressman Joe Courtney (ayanti.grant@mail.house.gov)
Senator Heather Bond Somers (jared.picco@cga.ct.gov)
Ned Lamont (ned@nedlamont.com; irene@nedlamont.com)
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