
Murphy Secures Highland Conservation Funds for Connecticut's Open Spaces

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Contact: Kristen Bossi

(202) 225-4476

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Late yesterday, President Obama signed into law \$1.5 million in funding secured by Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) and his colleagues from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, for the Highlands Conservation Act.

Created in 2004, the Highlands Conservation Act funds land conservation partnerships across these four states, including much of Litchfield County, protecting open space and watershed areas that serve approximately 15 million people. Last year, Highlands funding made possible the purchase and protection of the treasured 81-acre Towner Hill property in Sherman, helping local and state conservation leaders achieve an important conservation victory.

"Conservation of our remaining open spaces is critical to maintaining our environment and the resources that millions of us in the Northeast enjoy every day. This funding represents a renewed commitment to preserving the beautiful landscape that characterizes Connecticut and our neighboring states, and I'm glad to see our conservation efforts expanding," Murphy said, who is Co-Chairman of the Land Conservation Caucus in the House.

In January, Murphy wrote to the House Appropriations Committee urging it to include funding for the Highlands Conservation Act in the 2009 federal funding legislation. Because of Murphy's leadership, the Highlands Conservation Act is now being funded as part of the federal budget this year for the first time ever.

In recent weeks, both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate passed H.R. 1105, the Omnibus Appropriations bill, sending it out of Congress and to President Obama's desk. This legislation, which includes the \$1.5 million for the Highland Conservation Act, wraps up work on the Fiscal Year 2009 appropriations bills, and works in harmony with the economic recovery package, making investments that address the country's immediate needs while investing in our long term economic strength.

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