

House Republican Press Release

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**GOV. RELL SIGNS HOVEY LEGISLATION ESTABLISHING
EQUINE COUNCIL INTO LAW**



Panel Will Study Preservation Of Horse Trails

Governor M. Jodi Rell today signed legislation into law introduced by State Rep. DebraLee Hovey (R-Monroe, Newtown) that will establish an Equine Advisory Council to help the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) study state horse trail preservation. Public Act 07-42 takes effect immediately.

The legislation signed into law today evolved from a bill Rep. Hovey introduced early in this year's legislative session to preserve 25 horse trails in Connecticut. During a March 9, 2007 public hearing, representatives of several organizations testified in support of the need to preserve equine trails in Connecticut.

"This legislation is an important first step toward protecting horse trails in our state," said Rep. Hovey. "Just as we have made great strides in the past decade preserving open space, it is necessary to ensure equine trails are protected from development. I appreciate the support of my fellow legislators and Governor Rell on this initiative."

SB 1223 requires the advisory council's membership consist of the Connecticut Horse Council president and six representatives from an organization that serves the state's horse industry. Five of these six members must represent each of the state's Congressional districts. The sixth person must also be a member of the Connecticut Forests and Parks Association.

According to the Connecticut Horse Council, the horse industry provides over \$1 billion annually to the State of Connecticut, which is more than any other trail user group, and that members have spent over 4,500 hours on the trails, which translates into approximately \$32,000 in taxpayer money saved by having volunteers maintain the trails.