

House Republican Press Release

July 9, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

**REP. RYAN: APPLAUDS GOVERNOR SIGNING LAND TRUST
BILL**



HARTFORD – State Representative John J. Ryan (R-Darien and Rowayton) announced a law that would give towns the option of giving property tax abatements to land trusts has been signed by Governor M. Jodi Rell.

Land trusts are private, non-profit organizations dedicated to saving open space land. In existing law, land trusts are required to pay the property taxes for whatever remains of the first tax year in which they obtain ownership of land. Their tax exemption starts at the beginning of the next tax year if they file the correct papers. Many towns, recognizing the value of land trusts' work in protecting important natural and agricultural lands, desire to give the land trusts an immediate tax abatement or exemption starting from the date of ownership.

Rep. Ryan said, “The Darien Land Trust has been working diligently for this bill for some time. It is difficult enough for them to raise funds, identify, acquire and preserve open space, without having to pay the government for doing so! We are fortunate to have these dedicated folks in our community working for us and for future generations.”

The new law allows towns to abate these payments. A town may do this through its legislative body or, if that body is a town meeting, the board of selectmen.

Currently, the Darien Land Trust has protected 180 acres of open space in Darien. Of the total, 159 acres are owned by the Land Trust and 21 acres are protected by conservation easements

Terrie Wood who is the Darien Land Trust, Board of Trustee Chairwoman said, “We are grateful Rep. John J. Ryan and Governor M. Jodi Rell helped pass this bill. The Darien Land Trust operating budget could not absorb these property taxes. Without this tax abatement future land preservation efforts of the Darien Trust would be jeopardized.”

The new law takes effect immediately and is applicable to assessment years beginning October 1, 2007.

Representative John Ryan co-sponsored the legislation, which passed the state House in a unanimous 148-0 vote and the Senate by a 36-0 vote.