

Emily Harvey-Garcia  
Hartford  
LD 1882

I am a student and friend of the natural world, and have been since I was young decades ago. Growing up in rural Oxford County, Maine, I took advantages of nature walks, riding my bike several miles down the old railroad bed to Canton Lake, hiking, recycling initiatives. Eventually I studied Ecology at Wellesley College as part of my Environmental Science major, always appreciating nature all around me as well as learning all I could about it. I worked in Environmental Education, Watershed Stewardship, and Water Quality monitoring, and have an M.A. in Environmental Science and Policy from Clark University. Most recently I have been exploring vernal pools with the next generation. Vernal pools are only found in the spring, so kids enjoy hunting for them, finding spotted salamanders, etc. All indications (both academic and non-academic) are that vernal pools are incredibly valuable as well as increasingly rare. The proposed legislation is very important for everyone. If we think of our habitats as varied with the more rare habitats having a premium in terms of their value, vernal pools are one of the habitats with a premium in terms of their value to our ecosystem. Certain species will only reproduce in a vernal pool. Many other species depend on them, including humans who enjoy learning about them and seeing how they live for the pure joy of the experience. Joy is something we really need to preserve for all, along with the abstract concepts of ecosystems and the environment, which are also of great value.