Honorable [Legislator],

**I am requesting the protection of two long-distance trails, the Long Path and Highlands Trail**, which will be negatively impacted if unchecked development ensues in the vacant land parcels surrounding Seven Springs Road in Monroe, N.Y.

The undeveloped land along Seven Springs Road, adjacent to the proposed Town of Palm Tree, forms a critical land bridge between state and county parks for the Highlands Trail and Long Path. These multi-state trails are co-aligned here because there is nowhere else to place them. All surrounding connected land parcels are developed.

This critical pinch point alsoconnects two state parks, Schunnemunk Mountain and Goose Pond Mountain, and two county parks, Gonzaga Park and the Heritage Trail. **If a green corridor is not protected, development poses a major threat to critical access for these trails.**

Thesetrails are listed on the **New York Open Space Plan** as part of their green corridors initiative, which aims to***“maintain an******interconnected network of protected lands and waters*** *enabling flora and fauna to adapt to climate change,”* and to*“strategically preserve, restore, and/or create a matrix of natural systems sufficiently complex and* ***interconnected*** *to be self-sustaining while performing the critical natural functions necessary to sustain us.”* The Open Space Plan Policy recommends *“landscape-scale conservation in order to* ***assure connectivity*** *among [already] protected lands to provide greenways and wildlife migration routes.”*

The 358-mile Long Path connects New York City at the George Washington Bridge with the John Boyd Thatcher Park in Albany County, while the 150-mile Highlands Trail connects the Delaware River in New Jersey to the Hudson River at Storm King Mountain.

These greenways are a cooperative effort of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, conservation organizations, state and local governments, and local businesses actively working to preserve lands on either side of the trails to establish much-needed green corridors connecting state and county parks for both wildlife and people. **Without a formal agreement to protect the land for these trails, there will be nowhere else to go.**

Please consider the long-range vision for green corridors in Orange County and protect the Long Path and Highlands Trail by making **the creation of a green corridor** between Gonzaga Park at Seven Springs Mountain Road and Museum Village Road a **condition** of your upcoming vote.

Sincerely,