

## Senator Shae Keane Remarks on SSR-113-10

There is one student group, seemingly overlooked, who would most certainly be adversely affected by the proposed destruction. The trails, which have been both constructed and maintained by members of the East Tennessee State University's cycling club, are vital to much of this student club's activities. The members of this organization use the trails both for practice and conferences. Two of this club's largest events, both of which are official USA Cycling Sanctioned Races, draw people from all over the region to partake in their events, made possible by the extensive trail system located within these woods. Therefore, the proposed Land Swap would disrupt these events. In the Fall, they host the South East Collegiate Cycling Conference, drawing students from multiple universities. Because they host the conference, they are able to raise the funds necessary to allow them to participate in the races for the remainder of the year. The Land Swap would cut out a large portion of their Cross Country trail route, and would completely destroy the Downhill trail route, one of the most popular trail routes to race, and therefore, also one of the greatest sources of acquired funds.

Particularly because of the large commuter student population, student clubs and activities on campus are essential to contributing to an active student life. Other than the Cycling Club, there have been various campus groups who utilize these trail systems as a means to gain funds for their own organizations. This proposal would only serve to discourage these students from hosting activities on campus which promote student life.

Furthermore, the proposed Land Swap is contradictory to the very essence of what so many students love about ETSU, which is its location in area abounding with natural growth. ETSU is one of the very few universities in the nation which can claim to have trail systems located within the boundaries of the actual campus. It is a defining characteristic of this campus,

and an asset, emphasized by tour ambassadors to prospective students visiting the campus. Such destruction would prove even more so contradictory in that it would permit the eradication of a plethora of trees, many of which are older than the university itself, and all of which comprise a part the ETSU Arboretum. This is registered to include the entire campus and the adjacent University woods, and has not only a mission of conservation, but also of education, with information labels identifying the trees for educational purposes. Therefore, any destruction to this would prove inconsistent with the mission of the Arboretum and what should be a mission of ETSU.

I am speaking not only for the students of this university, but for the people of this community as well. On more than one occasion, I have been hiking on the trails and encountered a family or adult of the community enjoying the trail systems. I do not foresee this proposal serving to further maintain or cultivate relationships between the university and the citizens of the surrounding community. Furthermore, with a population so large, it would be detrimental to encroach upon any part of the woods or trail system.

I am expressing my concern before you today not in hopes of igniting a riot; I stand here because I am serving as a voice for a genuinely concerned student population. The well-kept trails represent the hard work of dedicated student organizations. The tracks upon them, represent the many students who have enjoyed a hike, bike, or run through the beauty of the surrounding forests. The trees represent a history that, upon destruction, can never be replaced, and the individuals who are enjoying the trails are our community, and our fellow students. The land at risk of destruction comprises a significant portion of this area. In recognition of its value and appreciation of its beauty, it is our duty to future students to ensure that it is protected. In closing, I respectfully request your support against the Proposed Land Swap.