

# The Connecticut General Assembly

## House Democrats

Christopher G. Donovan  
Speaker of the House



Denise Merrill  
House Majority Leader

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## **REP. BARAM SEEKS LAW TO PROTECT MDC FROM RECREATION LAWSUITS**

### *Action Follows Controversial Court Award To Bicyclist Injured on Trail*

State Rep. **David Baram** (D-Windsor, Bloomfield) on Wednesday said he will ask his colleagues to support legislation he plans to introduce that would give municipal immunity from lawsuits resulting from recreational activities to the Metropolitan District Commission.

A recent court decision found that the MDC was not immune from lawsuits occurring on its properties because it is engaged in the sale and distribution of water and sewer services.

In May, a Superior Court jury awarded \$2.9 million to a woman injured eight years ago while biking at the West Hartford Reservoir owned by the MDC. The woman drove her mountain bike into a gate, sustained serious injuries and later sued the MDC. As a result, the MDC is considering closing its facilities to recreational use.

“To avoid the closure of facilities to the public, we must restore the municipal immunity and protections it once enjoyed. It is to the greater public good to allow MDC sites to be open for community use and enjoyment,” Rep. Baram said.

“In my district of Bloomfield and Windsor, hundreds of residents use MDC’s Reservoir 6 for recreation. It would be a tremendous loss of public access to beautiful areas, which bring fun and joy to our families,” he said.

Rep. Baram has endorsed a resolution passed by the Hartford City Council that calls on the MDC to keep public lands open and accessible and for the legislature to restore municipal functions and protections to the MDC, a non-profit municipal corporation.

Rep. Baram is encouraging residents to attend a public hearing to be held by the MDC to gather input as it considers closing its facilities. The hearing is at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 20, in the West Hartford Town Hall Auditorium.