



CONNECTICUT REALTORS®

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**Statement on**

**HB 5008**

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIGH PERFORMANCE  
GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTARY ADOPTION BY  
MUNICIPALITIES**

**OPPOSE**

Submitted to the Energy and Technology Committee

March 5, 2020

By  
Connecticut REALTORS®

Connecticut REALTORS® (CTR) submits this testimony in **OPPOSITION** of **HB 5008, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIGH PERFORMANCE GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTARY ADOPTION BY MUNICIPALITIES**. CTR represents over 17,000 members involved in all aspects of real estate in Connecticut. CTR's members work with thousands of buyers, sellers, landlords and tenants annually.

**HB 5008** proposes to require the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to draft and adopt residential and commercial construction standards regulations by 2021 that towns would then be allowed to adopt, require the Commissioner to maintain a list of all towns that adopt stretch codes, give DEEP the ability to make determinations contrary to municipal actions and give DEEP the sole authority to grant variances.

Our statutes do not currently allow a municipality to adopt codes that differ from those found in the State Building Code. This is for good reason, since 1971, Connecticut has had a uniform statewide building code that has brought constantly improving codes and predictability to our code process. As a result, new home construction has never been more resilient and energy efficient. In fact, homes built to current code standards can be more than twice as energy efficient than the average resale home.

**HB 5008** would change nearly 50 years of uniformed state codes and standards adoption that has brought measured and predictable regulatory oversight to the construction industry in Connecticut.

The current process of adopting codes in Connecticut works extremely well and Connecticut statutes already explicitly require our code making body the Codes and Standards Committee take energy efficiency and resiliency under consideration. The Codes and Standards Committee is a diverse group of professionals appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services. All of which are codes experts with at least 10 years of practical professional experience within their respective fields. These code experts include energy efficiency experts, architects, engineers, commercial and residential builders, building officials, local fire marshals, building trade unions, public health officials, ADA experts and plumbing and heating professionals. Contrast this level of review with the Governor's proposal to allow DEEP to simply craft codes without a substantive review process or opportunity for public input and scrutiny.

CTR believes **HB 5008** will set a bad precedent leading to unintended consequences. Stretch codes will make it harder to build affordable housing in towns where they are adopted. Additionally, there are better ways to encourage increased energy efficiency in our homes. Real gains could be made by further incentivizing the retrofitting and remodeling of existing homes which, as mentioned earlier, can be on average less than half as energy efficient as home built to current code standards. Connecticut could provide modest tax incentives to new home buyers that consider the purchase of new homes with energy efficient standards beyond what is required in existing code. This approach would shift consumer habits, thereby increasing demand and incentivizing the market to produce more energy efficient homes. A tax credit would achieve better results without mandating a stretch code adoption that could price thousands of potential homebuyers out of the market for a new home.

Connecticut housing markets are still struggling to recover and **HB 5008** creates another obstacle to moving existing inventories in the marketplace.

For these reasons, CTR requests your **rejection** of **HB 5008, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIGH PERFORMANCE GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS FOR VOLUNTARY ADOPTION BY MUNICIPALITIES**. Thank you very much for your time and attention to this important matter.

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