

**To:** Senator Cassano,  
Representative McCarthy Vahey,  
Senator Hwang,  
Representative Zullo, and  
Members of the Planning and Development Committee,

**From:** Ross Burkhardt  
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Westport, CT

**Subject:** A statement in support of **S.B. 1024** or  
alternative bills **H.B. No. 6107, H.B. No. 6613, and S.B. No. 1026**

I have been a resident of Westport Connecticut for more than 40 plus years. During this time, I have devoted most of my professional life to developing affordable housing throughout Connecticut and in particular Fairfield County. Almost all of this housing was developed in the State's urban centers. My efforts to develop elsewhere were frustrated by suburban towns with land use policies that permitted the development and preservation of single-family homes, mostly on large lots.

It is long past the time for Connecticut to end its devotion to residential land use policies and regulations that exclusively permit the development and preservation of single-family housing. These policies have enforced inequality of opportunity for people of diverse racial, ethnic and economic opportunity and have in-fact placed a severe brake on the Connecticut's economic growth.

The Planning and Development Committee has several bills before it that would be a welcome step toward ending inequality of housing opportunities and the stagnate economic growth that goes with it. I urge that the Committee pass **S.B. 1024. AN ACT CONCERNING ZONING AUTHORITY, CERTAIN DESIGN GUIDELINES, QUALIFICATIONS OF CERTAIN LAND USE OFFICIALS AND CERTAIN SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS.** This bill takes a comprehensive approach to enabling people of all backgrounds and incomes to live in more places in Fairfield County. I therefore strongly support the following provisions found in the legislation:

- Legalizing accessory dwelling units in all single-family zones
- Encouraging transit-oriented development (TOD) with towns choosing 50% of areas within ½ mile of transit for 4+ unit housing
- Encouraging Main Street housing with towns choosing 50% of an area within ¼ mile of the main street for 2-4 unit housing, and requiring 10+ unit developments to be 10% affordable
- Developing model codes for buildings and streets by creating guidelines towns can choose to adopt to improve and clarify decision making

- Capping costly parking mandates by adjusting minimum parking requirements to 2 spaces per 2+ bedroom unit; 1 space per 0-1 bedroom unit; and 0 spaces in TOD and main street areas
- Requiring training for commissioners with 6 hours of professional development annually, including on fair housing and environmental issues
- Modernizing technical standards for certain sewage disposal systems for the 21st century

In lieu of the comprehensive approach to increasing housing opportunity and choice found in S.B. 1024, I ask the Committee to support the following separate pieces of legislation:

- **H.B. No. 6107** which promotes the state’s policy goal of encouraging all municipalities to plan for multi-family housing and housing affordable to low- and moderate-income families. Further, it requires zoning regulations affirmatively further the purposes of the federal Fair Housing Act and removes the highly subjective “character of the district” consideration, which has been used as the basis of discriminatory zoning decisions. All reasonable aspects of “character” are fully covered by other sections of § 8-2, including considerations of historic preservation, environmental impact, density, scale, location, and the suitability of uses.
- **H.B. 6613** that Permits ADUs and small multifamily housing more broadly and without undue restrictions will promote the incremental growth of our lower cost housing supply, bringing new residents to town centers and transit station areas while continuing to allow municipalities to control the physical and site characteristics of their community through their zoning ordinance, the health code, building code, and other regulations.
- **S.B. 1026** which allows municipalities to require members of planning and zoning commissions to complete four (4) hours of training annually, at least two of which must include training on housing alternatives or affordable housing. However, I recommend this bill be amended to increase the minimum hours of training to six (6) hours annually and require all members of planning and zoning commissions in Connecticut meet this minimum standard. We recommend the bill be amended to direct the state to develop such a training curriculum, to be administered in-person and online.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

Ross Burkhardt

Westport, CT