

## ***Cleaner Connecticut Coalition***

TESTIMONY ON *BILL SB 1024*

***AN ACT CONCERNING ZONING AUTHORITY, CERTAIN DESIGN GUIDELINES, QUALIFICATIONS OF CERTAIN LAND USE OFFICIALS AND CERTAIN SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS.***



via email to [pdtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:pdtestimony@cga.ct.gov)

By: Luis Estrella Executive Director, *Cleaner Connecticut Coalition*  
***3/12/2021***

Dear Chairman Cassano, Chairwoman McCarthy-Vahey, and Distinguished Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

Thank you for providing this opportunity to submit testimony on this important subject. On behalf of the Cleaner Connecticut Coalition, I am testifying in support of bill SB 1024.

The Cleaner Connecticut Coalition is a non-profit organization dedicated to sustainability and environmental protection. We restore, maintain, and develop land for public use in the State of Connecticut through Municipal and community partnerships.

We operate primarily in Fairfield County. Here in Fairfield County, we see a lot of development that has been done in areas that used to be forests – what we call sprawl.

Sprawl creates significant problems. First, it cuts down trees, which we need to clean our air. Second, it means we build more roads, and we drive more. Too much driving hurts our air quality. And third, sprawl is very expensive. Having one house on two or three acres of land makes housing very unaffordable.

You can see big price differences in housing across Fairfield County. Norwalk, where I live, is a lot less expensive than other suburban towns. As a resident, I had many more choices of housing in Norwalk than in other places. I could live in a duplex, or a townhouse, or an apartment building. These choices are not available in other communities. Some towns in Fairfield County only allow single-family housing - and no other kind of housing.

We need to find ways to diversify the types of housing we have in our state. *SB 1024* would achieve that goal. It would encourage us to build housing near main streets, where people could walk to businesses and restaurants. The Bill would also promote development around train stations, which is good for the environment because it puts people near transportation. It also reduces the need for cars.

The Bill would also limit the amount of parking we require property owners to build. Parking lots hurt the environment because they pave over green space and they increase stormwater runoff. This runoff is usually polluted, so when it runs into our rivers and streams, it hurts our fish and wildlife. In our part of Connecticut, the Long Island Sound is harmed. The environmental watchdog Save the Sound has given Long Island Sound a "[C](#)" [grade](#). One of the big reasons for this is that we have over-paved Fairfield County. This bill would help us reverse that bad trend.

In conclusion, the Cleaner Connecticut Coalition believes this bill will help Connecticut reduce pollution and protect our waterways from pollution. At the same time, it will help disadvantaged communities by providing them housing. The people who are hurt the most by our land use policies now are low-income Black and Latino families. This is not environmental justice. It is environmental injustice.

Thank you for letting me speak today.