

To: CT General Assembly Planning & Development Committee

From: Peter Gallagher, Resident of Bridgeport, CT

Re: SB 1024, An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications Of Certain Land Use Officials And Certain Sewage Disposal Systems

Date: March 15, 2021

Chairman Cassano, Chairwoman McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairman Needleman, Vice Chairwoman Goupil, Ranking Member Senator Hwang, Ranking Member Zullo, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Peter Gallagher, and I live in Bridgeport. I am originally from Bethel, where I was raised and lived much of my life before purchasing my new home. Connecticut is where I call home.

I am in support of this proposed bill. I work as a civil engineer and surveyor in this state, and I work with town zoning laws in my occupation on a regular basis. I believe it is in the best interests of Connecticut to reform zoning laws to encourage sustainable development, reduce car-oriented development and sprawl, and facilitate affordable housing for Connecticut residents. I wish to see the hinterlands of Connecticut remain green and undisturbed from sprawling housing often made the most feasible from the existing zoning laws. I believe that it is important for our state to develop great cities that contain a diversity of housing types and allow for accessibility to amenities without the use of a car. I believe that the reforms in this bill are a step in the right direction. Allowing denser housing will facilitate development in our established cities and protect the natural environment and resources in our exurb towns from encroaching sprawl.

Many parts of the state are lacking affordable housing for new homeowners, and I notice a trend in some towns where a large majority of new housing developments are large houses on large lots. As I have mentioned, there is the issue of land disturbance and sprawl, but additionally these housing developments are often unaffordable to new potential homeowners. Unfortunately, this is often the only option with current zoning, and building new diverse housing in our established urban areas and town village centers is made difficult with current zoning laws. I believe the measures in this bill will encourage the development of new homes which are affordable and near transit, allowing for travel without the need of a car. This will also have a positive effect on traffic congestion and pollution. Affordable and accessible housing will reinvigorate the State's population and workforce, while minimizing the need for car infrastructure, to create vibrant cities and town centers which the public and can congregate to and enjoy.

In addition, I believe it is wise to require certain qualifications for certain land use officials, as it should be an utmost priority that such officials are as educated as possible to competently execute these positions.

While I am unable to personally testify due my work schedule, I hope that the Committee values my written testimony. I am a member of the public who cares about both the built and natural environment the State, and I desire to see it prosper with proper development. I support this bill since I believe zoning reform can help build a better Connecticut. Lastly, I thank the Committee for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely,

Peter Gallagher