

March 15, 2021

Kim Healy, Wilton, CT

Dear esteemed members of the Planning and Development Committee. I thank you for your service and appreciate the opportunity to testify.

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 1024 and ask you to vote against it as written.

I am most concerned about the impact of one size fits all statewide zoning regulations. I am concerned that certain parts of the bills would cause the disastrous ruin of our cities. Thinking big picture, under bill SB1024 the real estate market would need to be flooded with housing to bring the house prices down. We have only just begun seeing the market recover from the financial crisis of 2008. To push through this bill now would be a huge set back to the small gains we are making. I am also concerned about the forced nature of the bill without any consideration to the unique needs of the different municipalities in our state.

I want to list some comments, some that are my own observations and others that are information that I have gathered over the past year while running for state office and meeting with many townspeople and officials from towns in the 26th district:

-ADU's are welcome here but from what I have heard, people who use them (or would use them) to house family members and not for added income opportunity.

-Removal of parking requirements assume that there are shops within walking distance of transit districts. In Wilton, we are a small town with minimal services within walking distance to the train station. A car would still be required if living in Wilton.

-I met with many different P&Z officials and heard about great developments that are being worked on. We need to ensure that we have a clear picture of what our towns are doing to bring a range of housing to it before making assumptions that they are doing nothing and need to be forced by this legislation.

-I have attended many of the seminars that were offered by the group who created this bill. I have asked them myself why they would not use all of the information that they have created to educate our municipalities instead of rushing to push thru statewide legislation. I was told that our towns would not change to bring low-income housing to our towns without being forced.

-Removal of the public hearings will create uncertainty in our housing system and as Americans we can not take away people's voice when it comes to our land/personal property rights.

-Septic and well systems are a huge concern of people in my district. We need to protect our systems and ensure that they are not burdened by the density that this bill hopes to bring to our towns.

-I do not believe that this bill will have the outcome that it is designed to achieve. Land in Fairfield county is expensive and scarce. Cost of construction is expensive. How will expensive housing help anything except developers? I assume they would bring local property taxes down as these properties would add to the grand list but if the goal is to help with affordable housing, this bill will not do that.

-any naturally occurring affordable housing has not been considered. I have been trying for quite some time to get data on how many units a town like Wilton has that would be considered affordable without using the state definition. I believe that before any state wide legislation is passed, this data needs to be compiled and analyzed.

- Why do all of our transit stations be treated the same? We need to focus on the different needs of each town individually.

-The bill does not give towns more power but coerces them into state determined zoning regulations. If the town does not conform to what the state has decided, then there will be penalties.

-Why does it seem that CT is abandoning our major cities? Stamford and Norwalk have made improvements over the last decade. Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport are plagued with problems. Why are those not the focus of these bills. Let's improve our cities and bring prosperity back to CT. Improve the educational outcomes for all students in CT.

We need to bring businesses back to CT. With good jobs and good education people will thrive in CT.

To summarize, a one size fits all approach should never be the answer. Let the municipalities opt in, provide them with the resources to do the work, and improve our cities. Let's get jobs and the economy going and improve our state education first.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and hope that all sides can work together to bring positive improvements to our state so we all have the opportunity to thrive into the future.

Best,

Kim Healy

