

To: Connecticut General Assembly Planning and Development Committee

From: Jared Klukas

RE: Testimony on 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 Connecticut General Assembly Joint Planning and Development Committee:

I would first like to thank the Committee for convening today to hear my testimony on such an advantageous bill for mending our state's inequitable antiquated zoning laws.

I am in strong support of SB 1024 and urge the Committee to pass this bill to ensure a more prosperous and inclusive future for Connecticut and all its residents. Having been born and raised in Connecticut, I have always noticed the issues of wealth disparity and inequality within our state. My acknowledgement of Connecticut's historic and systemic inequities grew more poignant during my time at UConn, where in my junior year I learned about redlining and restrictive zoning laws that inhibit economic growth, hinder equality, and pollute our environment.

SB 1024 is a bill that will work to reverse such discriminatory and limiting effects of our current outdated and exorbitant land use laws. Connecticut is currently facing a declining population, faltering economy, and high rates of cost-burdening that squelchers residents from supporting small businesses. One in six families within our state spend 50% of their income on housing rent and it is estimated that in cities like Hartford, 1 in 18 families are evicted from their homes annually.

These issues arise from unfair and quite limiting zoning laws--in over 90% of the municipal land in the state, single-family homes are permitted, meanwhile barely 2% of such land is zoned for multi-family (3+ family) housing. These socioeconomically harmful laws prevent new development and housing diversity within the state, which are key solutions to mending the wounds of inequality and economic stagnation that have scarred Connecticut.

The passage of SB 1024 will bring a much needed revitalization in the state and local economies by incentivizing development, spurring economic growth, and reducing cost burdening that plagues thousands of Connecticut residents and families. Especially due to our state's declining population, Connecticut needs an expansion of housing diversity. SB 1024 will bring more multi-family housing to many communities, which allows for more financial stability and support for small, family-run businesses in neighborhoods. Also, the development of ADUs as of

right will expand housing opportunities from the elderly, the college students, or recent college graduates alike, who are looking to move to Connecticut communities. According to the National Association of Home Builders, the annual economic benefits of developing 1,500 multi-family homes in the state will bring growth in nearly 3,200 jobs, \$275 million in income for residents, and almost \$40 million in taxes for local and state governments.

It is time for Connecticut to change its restrictive zoning laws so that we have more leniency, freedom, and ability to create more diverse housing types without changing the vibrant hometown feel of our communities. An expansion of housing types like ADUs and Middle Housing near transportation will increase movement and economic stimulation, while allowing for more affordable housing for those who need it most.

Connecticut is the only state within New England and the Tri-State area whose GDP declined overall from 2010 to 2018. Revamping Connecticut's zoning code to one that gives residents and developers more choice in housing options is the first step to tackling the clear economic issues within our state. In a 2019 study, urban planners and researchers found that housing supply constraints lowered US economic growth by 86% from 1964 to 2009. In a state with such high potential for economic growth and metropolitan interconnectivity, imagine what these restrictive and inhibiting laws have done to our state's potential and economic security.

SB 1024 is such an important and opportune bill for all Connecticut residents and families. It will increase affordable housing development, give more freedom to developers by ending extortionate and constricting parking mandates, and its passage will ensure a more equitable and stronger state. During my research on restrictive land use law I came across a quote that said how in order to make the biggest change in your community, look to zoning reform. Zoning affects every single avenue and part of our communities, from infrastructure, to small businesses, to education, and to inclusivity.

The time is now for Connecticut to realize its full potential. We *have* the power and the bill to do so. Our current zoning laws are antiquated and restrain Connecticut towns through hindering the economy and housing development. This bill will help us to make a step forward, not backward. Every single Nutmegger benefits from a cleaner, inclusive, and equitable state, and with the passage of SB 1024, you can help make our state an even greater place to live.

Thank you for listening to my testimony and my wholehearted support for this uplifting bill.
Sincerely,
Jared Klukas