

Dear Esteemed Members of the Planning & Development Committee,

My name is Lou Luba, and I am writing to voice my opposition to S.B. 1024. As a member of the Tolland Town Council, I have had the opportunity to see firsthand the incredibly positive impact local planning and zoning boards and commissions can have on their community. These boards are made up of residents looking to improve the communities in which they live, making decisions only after obtaining input from town residents and closely examining the unique issues that exist in each of their towns and municipalities. Our state was founded upon the principal of “home rule” allowing towns and municipalities to operate its own government and elected boards and commissions without undue interference from the General Assembly. Local planning and zoning commissions are a prime example of this “home rule” principal – locally elected officials that have a connection, and moreover an accountability to their community that does not exist on a state level commission. As set forth in Article Tenth, Section 1 of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut:

“[t]he general assembly shall enact no special legislation relative to the powers, organization, terms of elective offices or form of government of any single town, city or borough, except as to (a) borrowing power, (b) validating acts, and (c) formation, consolidation or dissolution of any town, city or borough...”

The provisions and terms set forth in S.B. 1024 run directly in opposition to Article Tenth, in that it seeks to severely restrict, or in certain situations outright remove, the ability of duly elected local planning and zoning commissions from exercising their duties and responsibilities as set forth in their respective municipal charters. It takes local control out of the hands of these locally elected officials and places it in the hands of unaccountable and unelected bureaucrats who have no ties nor knowledge of the community, its history or its values. S.B. 1024 looks to apply a “cookie cutter one-size-fits all” approach that may not work and have significant adverse impacts on smaller towns and municipalities. More concerning, S.B. 1024 opens the planning and zoning process to outside influence of special interests groups that may not have the best interest of the town in mind, looking to implement their own agendas without concern of how it may affect the town in the long run.

In summary, as presented by Rep. Tammy Nuccio (53<sup>rd</sup> District), “[w]hen it comes to development, it’s local residents—not the state or special interest groups—who know what works best for our communities.” I ask you to reject S.B. 1024, and leave the decisions related to planning, zoning and development to those best fitted to make decisions that will significantly affect their community – the residents and the elected officials of that municipality. Thank you for your time and attention on this extremely important issue of home rule within our state.

Sincerely,

Lou Luba  
Member - Tolland Town Council