

March 14, 2021

Esteemed Chairs Cassano and McCarthy Vahey,
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed Senate Bill No. 1024, An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications of Certain Land Use Officials and Certain Sewage Disposal Systems.

We oppose S 1024 and urge your committee to vote against it.

We understand that these bills are intended to increase the supply of affordable housing. This is a goal that many towns share and are delivering on. We disagree with the assumption that municipalities will not build affordable housing on their own and that state intervention is needed. We believe that when local governments voluntarily adopt regulations to promote affordable housing production through a process that includes hearings on regulations and proposals without external intervention those goals are met in a manner equitable to all.

We believe that SB 1024 will prove to be counterproductive, setting back equity rather than advancing it. This bill would compel municipalities to allow denser housing around transit stations and commercial corridors "by right" at market rate, without any affordability requirements. These are areas where a car is not necessary and are ideal for households that cannot afford to own one, yet there will be no affordability requirements.

SB1024 would also be directly at odds with a stable business climate by enabling a zoning commission to end any nonresidential land, putting commercial and industrial uses out of business through rezoning and issuance of a cease and desist letter.

We believe this bill does not take into consideration the environmental differences in the various towns and cities of this state—wetlands, topography, flood zones—as well as the strain on wells, septic and sewer systems, our schools and facilities.

Our local leaders are in the best position to study the unique needs and limitations within each of our communities and to make a plan that best implements the desired outcome of more affordable housing. This cannot and should not be a "one size fits all" plan being designed and directed by the state legislature. As long-time Connecticut residents, we urge your committee to reject SB 1024.

Thank you for your consideration,

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