

TESTIMONY PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 15, 2021

RE: SB 1024 AAC Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications of Certain Land-Use Officials and Certain Sewage Disposal Systems

TO: The Committee on Planning and Development

Chairs: Sen. Steve Cassano and Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey

Vice Chairs: Sen. Norman Needleman and Rep. Christine Goupil

Ranking Members: Sen. Tony Hwang and Rep. Joseph Zullo

And Co-sponsors and Honorable Members of the Committee

FROM: Margaret Miner

DATE: March 15, 2021

The extent and degree of racial and economic segregation in Connecticut is shocking and immoral. I write this testimony as someone who moved to here 40 years ago from a totally integrated, poor urban neighborhood. I had spent much time as a child in the Connecticut countryside and woods, and when we had to leave the city, we looked to Connecticut and only Connecticut.

Bill 1024 addresses segregation that results from or is attributed to zoning law and regulation. The recommended zoning reforms are complicated, and I cannot reliably assess all the details, but I have personally supported many of the recommendations over the years.

I urge the committee to prioritize (explicitly or implicitly) those reforms that lead most rapidly and beneficially to actual racial and economic desegregation.

Since the creation of the Blue Ribbon Housing Commission and the Sheff v. O'Neill case, both about 30 years ago, we have experienced far too much bait and switch. This is partly because the state began to outsource its responsibilities to the private marketplace, which only responds to profit signals. The result has been a lot of fighting and not much affordable or integrated housing.

My profession and avocation since year 2000 has been as an advocate for the protection of the state's natural waters. I worked as executive director of Rivers Alliance of Connecticut and now work as a consultant. In general, I believe we can have healthy streams and equitable housing and schools. Specifically, I do

have considerable knowledge of onsite sewage treatment systems. In the past, Rivers Alliance has supported transferring authority over these systems from DEP (as it was then) to DPH. But that was then there was a plan to develop a program with standards for performance, reporting, maintenance, and so forth. **At this time, I hope Committee will focus on a requirement to develop the needed program rather than transferring authority over additional systems from DEEP to DPH.** One problem to keep in mind is that the smaller the system, the more difficult to run properly.

Thank you for your work on this important issue. If I can answer questions or otherwise help, please let me know.

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