

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you all in response to S.B 1024 (An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications of Certain Land Use Officials and Certain Sewage Disposal Systems.) While I certainly agree that the need for more diverse housing in Connecticut is an important topic of concern, I believe that there are better ways to achieve it. My main concern in this bill is the removal of local control in zoning regulations. Each town/village in this state has a unique look and “feel” to it. We have beautiful downtown city areas with great entertainment and dining as well as quaint farming communities producing lovely local produce. What makes these towns unique to each other is the local zoning control of the community. Boards/Commissions and Town Councils receive input from their residents and the community decides what is best for their individual town needs. Decisions for small towns like mine of North Branford should be made by the residents and not the politician’s in Hartford or those who live 100 miles away.

In the town on North Branford we have a large area of land that is owned by the Regional Water Authority (RWA) and not available for development for any type of housing. This already severely limits new residential development of any kind in town and assigning arbitrary percentages on what should be very low income, age restricted, style/type of residence will make it very difficult to comply. By punishing towns that are unable to comply with fines will also hurt already financially strapped communities.

I also find fault that in driving up residency in certain towns will have an adverse reaction on public services. For example North Branford has a very small police department and fully volunteer fire/ems department. If residency now increases at a rate that the emergency services and public works departments are unable to keep up with, then all residents whether lifelong or new will suffer. Boards of Education will also have to adapt in an increase in student enrollments. This bill does not address where the additional funding for these services will come from.

Once again I would like to state that while I am in agreement with looking at options for more diverse housing options, I feel more research should be done on the subject by the legislature with less influence from special interest groups.

Thank you for your time,
Nicholas Palladino