

To: Connecticut General Assembly Planning & Development Committee

From: Clayton Stevenson, resident of Avon

Re: 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 Committee:

I am writing today in support of SB 1024 because Connecticut needs to take steps to embrace data-driven, sustainable, equitable and fair growth now and into the future. I moved to Connecticut nearly 10 years ago, having grown up in the southern United States and then spending many years in various states up and down the east coast. From that experience, I have seen the variations – good and bad – that can result from a state’s approach to zoning and land use. I have stayed in Connecticut because I have come to love it – it is where I wanted to raise my children. And I have made wonderful friendships along the way. And as much as I love Connecticut as it is today, I know it can be so much better if it makes sound, well-informed decisions today to improve the lives of all in the state.

In my near decade in the state, I have observed several things:

- 1) The state is in need of more affordable housing, and not just concentrated in a handful of locations;
- 2) The state needs more diverse housing stock to meet the needs of a wider array of our citizens as one-size definitely does not fit all;
- 3) The state should maintain its natural beauty – its forests, its farmland, its shoreline – and protect its environment; and
- 4) The state needs to modernize and invest in all of its people, recognizing that small towns and cities alike have common interest and shared goals, and move away from outmoded practices that have the effect of dividing us.

SB 1024 gives us a chance to tackle these things. It will enable our towns to direct and focus development to places with existing infrastructure and, in doing so, reduce the pressures for sprawl that harm the state’s natural beauty, its rural character, and its smaller towns. It will help all of Connecticut by adapting and adopting a ready-made, no-cost model code across the state, reducing the complexities and cost of zoning variances and the costly litigation that inevitably results from them. It evens the playing field so smart development can flourish, with a variety of housing options, not just a one-size fits all approach that prevents a diversity of options from existing in many parts of Connecticut and keeps us apart from one another.

I therefore urge you to support SB 1024 and give Connecticut cities and towns the tools to increase affordable housing stock, increase the diversity of our housing, develop Main Street housing concepts

and transit-oriented development, implement model codes for buildings and streets to help our towns make smart choices, cap wasteful and costly parking mandates that do not make sense in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and train our town zoning commissioners to help reduce costs and drive more equitable results statewide.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Clayton Stevenson  
Avon resident