

To: CT General Assembly Planning & Development Committee

From: Leigh Stewart, Town of Greenwich

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 to offer my support of SB 1024 and encourage passage of this legislation. I believe this bill will have a positive impact on our state by promoting equity, increasing access to affordable housing, and encouraging housing practices that are more environmentally sustainable.

When I first moved to Connecticut as a young professional some fifteen years ago, my first impression of the state was that it was a place with extreme concentrations of wealth and of poverty. I realize now that this condition did not arise by default, but by design. The zoning regulations of the state's various municipalities have created segregation and inequity in our built environment. Changes to these regulations could have a widespread positive impact on Connecticut's future. Studies such as the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) experiment have shown that young children who's families move from high-poverty to lower poverty neighborhoods have better outcomes for college attendance and income potential, among other factors.

As an architect, a mother and a citizen, I value diversity and believe Connecticut should strive to be a place where each municipality has socio-economic diversity and inclusion. The way to realize this is through zoning reform that allows for a variety of types of housing stock, including multi-family and affordable units.

Making way for a diverse array of types and price-points within the state's housing market will not only pave the way for equity and opportunity, but as the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) has modeled, will bring economic growth in the form of income, tax revenue, and job creation.

I encourage you to pass SB 1024, which will improve equity and provide better opportunity for all of Connecticut's residents with no upfront costs of note to the state.