

March 15, 2021

Planning and Development Committee, Connecticut General Assembly

Re: Senate Bill No. 1024 – An Act Concerning Zoning Authority, Certain Design Guidelines, Qualifications of Certain Land Use Officials and Certain Sewage Disposal Systems

Senate Chairman Cassano, House Chairwoman McCarthy-Vahey, Ranking Senator Hwang, Ranking House Member Zullo and members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I am writing to you to express my opposition to S.B. 1024.

The need for more affordable housing in Connecticut needs to be addressed and the conversation around this issue must continue with all stakeholders engaged. However, S.B. 1024 does not accomplish this. It does little to increase housing affordability in certain communities and it eliminates the voice of key stakeholders - local zoning officials and residents.

It is critical that planning and development continues to be debated, discussed and decided upon locally. Varying real estate prices, broad and diverse environmental factors and differing levels of access to public transportation are just a few examples of what makes each municipality unique. A state-mandated zoning approach will ignore these factors and will strip local communities of the ability to make the most effective zoning decisions.

The unintended consequences of S.B. 1024 could actually result in an adverse impact on the creation of affordable housing in certain municipalities, including Westport. Enabling local communities to debate and determine their affordability plans, based on local knowledge of what will be most effective, continues to be the best way forward. Westport has been doing this and will continue to do this as we work to increase affordable housing. There is not a one-size-fits-all mandatory solution.

Thank you for your service and for your consideration.

Kind Regards,

Jennifer Tooker
Westport, Second Selectwoman