

Dear Members of the Planning and Development Committee,

I presently serve my community as Chairman of Planning & Zoning Commission in Suffield, and have been active in local government for over 25 years. I write to express my concern and opposition to SB 1024.

Suffield had been successful in establishing affordable housing and recently received a moratorium while we work to develop our 8-30j affordable housing plan. In recent years we have amended our regulations to allow for additional new affordable housing units as well as accessory dwelling units. Our commission has done an outstanding job of supporting growth and development, while taking adequate measures to preserve our farms, open space, water quality and habitat. We know our community and how best to balance the multitude of issues that need to be considered when encouraging and approving the level and types of growth Suffield needs and can support.

What has been successful in Suffield isn't likely to work well in Hartford or Fairfield, nor Morris or Sterling. Every community in Connecticut is unique and it takes experienced local leaders to guide growth and development. It's why we have and regularly update our Plan of Conservation and Development - to ensure our community grows wisely and sustainably. Well intentioned, but misguided development too often results in consequences that last generations. SB 1024 will very likely have just this type of deleterious impact across our 169 towns and cities. I have similar concerns with HB 6611, HB 6612, HB 6613, SB 1025, SB 1026, SB 1027 and HB 6107.

The 8-30g statute is in need of some tweaks, but it is not in need of radical changes encompassed in SB 1024 – just recognizing and encouraging the rehabilitation of existing housing stock (pre 1990) would be a great start and allowing alternatives to the deed restriction requirements in 8-30g would encourage targeted and needed mixed income development; and doing so would allow us to have a true understanding of the affordable housing already present in many of our communities.

I thank you for your time and consideration of the concerns I have raised. I urge you to oppose SB 1024 and similar bills under consideration that will erode local control and risk the success we've enjoyed encouraging a balanced mix of new housing while preserving our farms and historic charm and rural character.

Mark Winne

Chairman, Suffield Planning & Zoning Commission