

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5317

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING ONLINE BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATIONS.

Vote Date: 3/2/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/9/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

General Law Committee

Co-sponsors: [Rep. Craig C. Fishbein, 90th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Tim Ackert, 8th Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill allows towns to issue building permit applications on-line for increased efficiency for both the applicant and municipal building officials across the state. At present, forty towns in the state are using this to save time between submission and approval of permit applications.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Rep. Tim Ackert, Connecticut House of Representatives, 8th District.

Rep. Ackert supports codifying the existing practice of on-line submission of building permits in municipal building departments. Presently, 40 towns use this in our state, both for residential and commercial purposes.

Betsy Gara, The Council of Small Towns

COST **supports** updating CT state statute to explicitly allow the use of electronic signatures for building permit applications, to expedite the process and assure

authenticity of permit applications to both applicants and municipal officials. It does not make this mandatory, as some towns do not have the ability or financial resources to do this and it is presently not cost effective.

Samuel S. Gold, ACIP, Executive Director, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments.

RiverCOG **supports** this and adds proposed layers to the original legislation. They request that municipalities be allowed to accept only digital files, with DAS having the authority to set minimum state standards. They suggest that DAS, OPM, the State Library, other states' best practices, municipal building officials, and others invested in the process, should set standards for minimal allowable digital file types, storage, security, and methods for back-up of same. The bottom line is, they feel it will save taxpayers money and give applicants more flexibility in filing, while establishing strict guidelines supported by multiple sources.

**Jennifer Jennings, Executive Director,
Stillman Jordan, P.E., C.E.M, Executive, Government Affairs, Chairman.
CONNECTICUT HEATING AND COOLING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION.**

This association **supports** the of allowing of contractors and builders to submit their applications on-line. In their view, this allows business personnel to remain at their offices, electronically send applications to municipal building officials while continuing to work, thus saving both time and money for both sides.

**Zachery McKeown, Senior Legislative Associate,
THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES**

CCM **supports** this legislation. This bill gives municipalities the ability to allow on-line building application permits. In addition, it is enabling the existing statutory language, strengthening it regarding the digital submission of on-line building permit applications.

**Jim Perras, CEO, HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

Our organization **supports** this bill as it brings our statutes up to date, mirroring what is already common practice in many cities and towns in Connecticut, who are already allowing the on-line processing of building permit applications. In the Capitol Regional Council of Governments, there are presently thirty-five towns that make use of this, with eleven more towns shortly beginning to use the areas on-line services offered by municipal building offices.

**Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director, WESTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS.**

WestCOG **supports** this legislation. In addition to reducing costs and delays, the ability to send building permit applications on-line, creates a system of better and more effective customer service for applicants, staff and the public. WestCOG also suggests that applications be required to be submitted in digital form, with language determined by DAS and the Connecticut Geographic Information Officer (GIO). Also, to allow municipalities to charge a fee if the permits are not submitted per the DAS/GIO standards, in addition to enlarging the bill to include land use applications, surveys and subdivision maps.

Their belief is that this will set a standard of high quality data that can be used by both the cities and towns and the public. It will improve information available for planning and policymaking on all levels.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Kathleen K. Zabel

Date: March 2, 2023