

Planning and Development Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6648

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ONLINE RECORDING, INDEXING AND

Title: SEARCHING OF MUNICIPAL LAND RECORDS AND MAPS.

Vote Date: 3/19/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/15/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Planning and Development Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill requires the OPM secretary to establish a commission to study the processes, associated costs, and benefits of creating and maintaining a public online database for the recording, indexing, and searching of such land records and maps. The group must report to the legislature by June 20, 2024, including information on needed legislative changes. By January 1, 2025, OPM's secretary must establish such an online database.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Martin L. Heft, Undersecretary, Ct State Office of Policy and Management](#): Opposes this bill

OPM is not involved in the recording of municipal land records and mapping duties. These responsibilities are handled by the town or city clerk, who could provide input into this undertaking.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director, CT Land Conservation Council \(CLCC\)](#):

This bill would enable a holistic review and evaluation of the state's current system of municipal data collection and provide a much-needed opportunity to create a single-source, statewide database of information about public and private land ownership in Connecticut.

Aicha Woods, Director, Fairfield County's Center for Housing Opportunity:

Access to statewide land records data on a consistent, accurate, user friendly and transparent platform will be a tremendous benefit for regional and local planning. This should absolutely be fully resourced and maintained at the state level. Currently there is a patchwork of systems of varying quality and types of information, that is frustrating and inadequate for the people who want to do business in CT, for local government and for the public.

Francis Pickering, Executive Director, Western CT Council of Governments (WestCOG):

This bill would address many costs and risks that are detailed in my written testimony. CT's land records system is expensive, slow, and not resilient. This bill would initiate transformation, providing benefits (reduced costs; fewer delays; fewer errors; improved redundancy; unlocked value) to a wide range of parties with an interest in land records.

Jonathan Anderson, VP and Senior Underwriting Counsel, CATIC:

Creating a commission to study the concept of a publicly funded and maintained database is a necessary first step in finding a solution to the problems created by both the widespread outage of a private online database and the lack of a uniform procedure for maintaining a current parallel system as part of a disaster recovery plan.

Samuel S. Gold, ACIP, Executive Director, Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG):

Moving Connecticut's public records online and providing for online public access and interactions with municipal government, will save time and money. Weekday daylight hours spent in town and city halls is time not spent on jobsites. Online access will support economic development and reduce costs for those working in our land development, construction, real estate, and banking sectors. It will also help make the work of our municipal building and land use staff easier.

Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association:

As an organization interested in connecting trails and establishing habitat corridors across several towns, having ready access to municipal land records is exceptionally useful. Without online statewide access to this information, we will have to continue finding information on a town-by-town basis, often at some transportation or other cost to CFPA or its land stewardship volunteers. There have been many instances where access to municipal land records and maps has been helpful, and online access would be a huge step forward for how our state maintains and shares data.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anna M. Posniak, Co-Chair, Legislative Committee Connecticut Town Clerks Association:

This bill requires OPM to appoint and convene a commission for online recording, indexing, and searching of municipal land records and maps however it does not state who would be on the committee. There are various stakeholders that would need to participate in a commission that is to determine any changes to the processing of land records.

Reported by: Robert Mayne

Date: March 22, 2023