



Creating Great Communities For All

Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association

Testimony regarding

Proposed Bill No. 5132– AN ACT CONCERNING THE REORGANIZATION OF THE ZONING ENABLING ACT AND THE PROMOTION OF MUNICIPAL COMPLIANCE

CCAPA supports this Proposed Bill, which affirmatively furthers the goals of the federal Fair Housing Act and brings greater clarity through the statute’s reorganization. Our organization supported the purpose and intent of a similar bill during the last legislative session but emphasized the importance affirmatively furthering fair housing goals, underscoring municipal responsibility for the required affordable housing plan, and defining the authority for State-level oversight. This Proposed Bill addresses those concerns that were not addressed in H.B. No. 6749.

Without reserving support for this Proposed Bill, CCAPA recommends a couple of minor changes and considerations:

- As proposed, the language of Section 2(a)(2) (starting on line 220) states that when a municipality is required to submit an affordable housing plan and a plan of conservation and development in the same year, the municipality may include the plan of conservation and development in the affordable housing plan. We respectfully submit that the language should be reversed so that the housing plan may be incorporated into the plan of conservation and development. The language would be modified as follows: “...such [plan of conservation and development] affordable housing plan may be included as part of such [affordable housing plan] plan of conservation and development.” It is CCAPA’s position that the plan of conservation and development is the more global planning document and it is due every 10 years. The affordable housing plan can be one component of a successful plan of conservation and development. However, to permit the comprehensive plan to be a subset of the affordable housing plan, may accidentally create a way for the purpose and intent of the plan of the conservation and development to be undercut.
- Some additional attention should be paid to the five-year timeframe for affordable housing plans and the ten-year timeframe for plans of conservation and development. The fluctuations in the housing market should prompt municipalities to do a more frequent review of their affordable housing plans, but some clarity around what is expected every five or ten years might benefit this Proposed Bill. Instead of a new plan every five years, the legislature might consider requiring a new plan every ten years and a compliance review or benchmarking exercise at the intervening five year mark.
- On line 307, each municipality must prove compliance with the requirements by June 1, 2027. This date should be June 1, 2022 to be congruous with other dates referenced

throughout the Proposed Bill. As drafted, the Proposed Bill would give municipalities an additional five years before initially complying with the affordable housing plan requirements.

- In the same subsection (c), the Proposed Bill creates an effective date but does not create an incentive or disincentive for compliance. The Office of Policy and Management should have a mechanism to encourage compliance.

CCAPA supports that the State-level oversight and authority is vested in the Office of Policy Management and that the municipal review of the affordable housing plan is at a five-year interval because of the nature of the fluctuating housing market and the nature of the affordable housing crisis. Further, we support the Office of Policy and Management convening of a working group, charged with developing and recommending guidelines and incentives for municipal affordable housing plans. CCAPA believes that this would provide the guidance necessary to ensure that Connecticut's municipalities are meeting their existing and proposed statutory responsibilities, as well as ensuring that the State is an active participant in this process to both assist municipalities and hold them accountable. The timeline ensures that these requirements will proceed swiftly, and allows municipalities to incorporate housing in a more thoughtful and comprehensive way into their local plans.

CCAPA remains committed to active advocacy, at all levels of government and in the private sector, for the expansion of housing opportunities and furtherance of fair housing in Connecticut. We believe that this bill will continue the State's progress toward that goal. We stand ready to continue to be a resource to the legislature in this ongoing effort.

WHO WE ARE

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA) has over 420 members who are governmental and consulting planners, land use attorneys, citizen planners, and other professionals engaged in planning and managing land use, economic development, housing, transportation, and conservation for local, regional, and State governments, private businesses and other entities. CCAPA has long been committed to assisting the legislature and State agencies with developing and furthering responsible growth management principles. The APA is an independent, not-for-profit, national educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities.

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