



*Creating Great Communities For All*

# Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association

Testimony regarding  
**Proposed Bill No. 183 – AN ACT CONCERNING REMOTE MEETINGS UNDER THE  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

**CCAPA strongly supports this proposed bill** that allows for municipal boards and commissions the option to continue to conduct remote public meetings by amending **CGS §1-225** to incorporate the Governor's emergency orders during the COVID pandemic into the state law that governs public meeting requirements.

Although some personal interaction among the public elected officials themselves has been missed, feedback from our professional membership has found that remote meetings for both Planning and Zoning Commissions and Zoning Boards of Appeals have gone surprisingly well with better resident participation, improved overall acoustics, and wider access to public hearing materials that towns now have made fully available on local municipal websites. The increase in public access and participation in community meetings has been an unexpected silver lining during the COVID pandemic.

When the COVID restrictions are lifted and allow for regular municipal public meetings to resume, we certainly expect some Boards and Commissions to choose an in-person option. However, having a remote or a hybrid option available, particularly during the winter months and other traditional vacation times, would be a great option that allows for less uncertainty for applicants, staff, and Boards and Commissions alike, when weather or quorum-related cancellations can occur - sometimes mid-day for a hearing that evening with very little notice. CCAPA believes strongly that the COVID pandemic inadvertently added a much-needed tool to the public meeting toolbox, and we hope that the committee and the legislature will strongly consider adding this option permanently.

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## **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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## CONTACTS

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