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*Testimony by Representative Diana Urban
Before the Judiciary Committee
On Senate Bill 672
March 24, 2006*

Good afternoon Chairman McDonald, Chairman Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Representative Diana Urban, representing the 43rd District, and I am here to speak on SB 672 AN ACT CONCERNING STANDARDS FOR THE DENIAL OF AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING APPLICATION.

I am a strong advocate for affordable housing in Connecticut. The lack of housing is one of the major reasons why we have been losing the 25 to 34 year olds at such a rapid rate. The exit of this vibrant sector of our workforce does not bode well for the future of Connecticut's economy. We are also in the situation of pricing our seniors out of their homes. Clearly we need to work hard on this issue.

In trying to understand what SB 672 is trying to accomplish, I am relying on my ten years as a member of the North Stonington P&Z Commission. It appears to me that the bill's intent is to clarify that the phrase "...or other matters which the commission may legally consider" is not limited to matters of public health and safety. It has been my experience that local land use agencies have never considered the statute to be limited to public health or public safety matters rather have utilized open space preservation, water quality, erosion control, and historic preservation in their decision and have been upheld in the courts.

There is substitute language for the purpose of clarifying this section that housing advocates have offered. I am very supportive of that language. The raised bill as it now stands seems to be so complex as to cause confusion.

I appreciate the committee for allowing me to testify on SB 672.