



1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut

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PRESERVING, CONSERVING AND GROWING SMART

1000 Friends of Connecticut
Testimony on Raised Bill 5673 An Act Concerning Review of Projects of Regional
Significance; Raised Bill 5674 An Act Concerning the Powers of Regional Councils of
Government, and Raised Bill 5714 An Act Concerning Zoning for Starter Homes
to the Planning and Development Committee
March 3, 2008

Senator Coleman, Representative Feltman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. For the record, my name is Heidi Green and I'm president of the statewide smart growth education and advocacy organization, 1000 Friends of Connecticut. 1000 Friends is a broad, politically and geographically diverse coalition of individuals and organizations committed to growing robust cities, walkable vibrant neighborhoods, healthy natural habitats, clean air and water, and a viable agricultural economy here in Connecticut.

As you know, in 2007, 1000 Friends of Connecticut released *Developing Connecticut's Economic Future*. This report contained a comprehensive set of policy recommendations we feel will help Connecticut grow smarter, more sustainably, more responsibly.

We recommend the committee approve bill 5673. It authorizes regional planning organizations to weigh in on projects of regional significance. These projects often have impacts that extend beyond the boundary of the town in which they are located, and we believe it is appropriate for representatives of the entire region be meaningfully involved in deciding their fate. We suggest one slight change in lines 27 & 28. Approval or denial of the project by two-thirds of the members of the commission shall be required in approval or denial is inconsistent with findings and recommendations of the RPO. Denial of the project by two-thirds of the members of the commission shall be required in denial is inconsistent with findings and recommendations of the RPO.

We also support raised bill 5674, an Act Concerning the Powers of Regional Councils of Government, and we encourage the committee include incentives to municipalities that opt to share revenues regionally. In *Developing Connecticut's Economic Future*, we recommended allowing municipalities a one percent share of the sales tax collected in their regions.

I am testifying in opposition to Raised Bill 5714 An Act Concerning Zoning for Starter Homes. Though 1000 Friends fully supports the intent of the bill to encourage more affordable housing opportunities in the state. We prefer giving municipalities incentives to meet affordable housing demand like those proposed by HOME Connecticut to zoning mandates for every town.

We also recommend that the language in lines 32 to 38 be changed to, "Such regulations shall be designed to efficiently transport people and goods, to secure safety from fire, panic, flood and other dangers; to promote health and the general welfare, to provide adequate light and air; to encourage mixed use, mixed income, compact development where appropriate, and to maximize the use of existing transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public infrastructure."

I thank you for your attention and am happy to address any questions. Thank you.