



HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT, INC.
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*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

March 7, 2008

To: Senator Eric Coleman, Co-Chairman
Representative Art Feltman, Co-Chairman
Members of the Planning & Development Committee

From: Bill Ethier, Executive Vice President & General Counsel

Re: **Raised Bill 5798, An Act Establishing a Tax Credit for Green Buildings**

The HBACT is a professional trade association with over one thousand five hundred (1,500+) member firms statewide employing tens of thousands of Connecticut's citizens. Our members are residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals providing services to this diverse industry. We also created and administer the CT Developers Council, a professional forum for the land development industry in the state.

The HBA of Connecticut supports RB 5798 with an amendment. We support the idea of incentivizing consumers and builders to build more energy efficiency into their homes and other types of developments. However, the standard known as LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Design) is only one of several nationally recognized green building standards. Green Globes is an alternative standard for commercial construction and the NAHB Model Green Home standard is an alternative for residential construction.

I would be happy to share with you a copy of the NAHB Model Green Home standard – it's a book so I did not attach it to my testimony. The NAHB standard is a voluntary, market-driven approach that a tax credit would tie into very nicely. The NAHB standard allows for the use of a wide range of materials and offers builders the flexibility to weigh environmental benefits, cost effectiveness, life-cycle costs and ease of implementation when making material choices. It also offers both a performance based approach (e.g., achieve 30% more efficiency than the International Energy Efficiency Code, which is part of the State Building Code in Connecticut), or a prescriptive approach (i.e., obtain a certain level of points for doing different things). And, like LEED, the NAHB standard has three levels of "green" achievement, with silver being in the middle.

Therefore, we urge the committee to incorporate the silver rating for the "National Association of Home Builders model green home building guidelines" into the bill in addition to any citation to the LEED standard. I do not know what the fiscal impact of this addition would be. The NAHB standard would be less costly to implement for an individual home but would allow more home owners and builders to pursue construction under it since it is more flexible and cost effective than the LEED standard.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation.