



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

March 16, 2009

To: Senator Ed Meyer, Co-Chairman
Representative Richard Roy, Co-Chairman
Members of the Environment Committee

From: Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer

Re: **Raised Bill 6345, An Act Protecting the Natural Resources of the Highlands Region**

The HBA of Connecticut is a professional trade association with almost one thousand, three hundred (1,300) member firms statewide that build 70% to 80% of all the new dwelling units in the state and employ tens of thousands of Connecticut citizens. Our members are residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to this diverse industry.

The HBA of CT strongly opposes Raised Bill 6345, not to support the Yale Farm Golf Club, but because of the principal that the legislature should not step into ongoing regulatory processes to retroactively destroy private and public investments.

This bill represents state government zoning at its worst. It sends another emphatic message to businesses and developers to stay away from Connecticut. It says you can come here and spend hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars to go through our complex and slow regulatory system, and just when you think you're almost there, the legislature can step in and pull the plug on permits you're close to getting. Why would any sane business risk their investment dollars to face this gauntlet? Why would any bank or lender risk their investment to fund acquisition and development efforts?

This bill continues a line of legislative disincentives to economic development and job growth due to special legislation that overturns or prohibits local or state approvals for specific developments (from the "lake law" bill to stop a specific shopping center, to the AT system moratorium bills to stop a specific housing development). **The legislature has to stop interfering in ongoing regulatory processes impacting specific developments.** If the legislature wants to change regulatory processes or requirements, which is certainly within its power and prerogative, such changes should be made prospectively without impact to already filed permit applications. Only then will businesses and developers perceive some semblance of certainty and bounds on the investments risks they are willing to make.

While this bill is directed specifically at Yale Farm Golf Club, again we make no statement about supporting or opposing that particular development. We do strongly oppose the state legislature stepping into the permitting process, to retroactively overturn local and state permits (or about to be approved permits), extinguishing substantial private investments as well as public expenses in reviewing and vetting a proposed development.

Please do not support HB 5461. Thank you for considering our comments on this legislation.

Representing the Home Building, Remodeling and Land Development Industries In Connecticut
"Enhancing Our Member's Value to Their Customers and Our Industry's Value to Society"