



HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

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Business*

February 18, 2009

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

From: Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer

Re: Proposed Bill 5868, AAC Economic Development Teams

The HBA of Connecticut is a professional trade association with almost one thousand, three hundred (1,300) member firms statewide, employing 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. We also created and administer the Connecticut Developers Council, a professional forum for the land development industry in the state.

The HBA of Connecticut supports Proposed Bill 5868 as a necessary way to streamline and coordinate the development permitting process.

Connecticut's development and permitting environment is extremely difficult. Very often, the multitude of local and state agencies that need to review and approve a proposed development or activity do not communicate or coordinate their reviews. In many cases, the various reviews are sequential, rather than simultaneous or concurrent, which further lengthens the overall processing time. The legislature's Blue Ribbon Commission on Affordable Housing and Economic Development recently reviewed a draft development due diligence spreadsheet that shows a possible thirty-five (35) stops at the municipal level and twenty-five (25) stops at the state level for development activity. Add federal permits, reviews by private and public utilities and delays caused by litigation from opponents and Connecticut has a perfect storm of approval nightmares. **It does not surprise us that Connecticut lags in so many economic development, housing and demographic indicators as compared to other states.**

We urge you to positively review this bill, along with Proposed Bill 580, An Act Streamlining the Permit Approval Process, referred to this committee by the Commerce Committee, not on today's agenda but offered for the same purpose.

The bill admittedly would be difficult to draft and, as an organization of members who deal with the local and state permitting processes on a daily basis, we offer assistance to the committee in doing so. **The critically important point is that the need for this bill could not be greater** and now, when development activity is at a low point, is the time to do it.

Therefore, we support the concept of creating economic development teams or other ways to streamline and coordinate our byzantine permitting system. Thank you for the opportunity to comment 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"