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Co-Chairman and Members
Planning and Development Committee
Room 2100, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **S.B. 1041, AAC the Demolition of Buildings.**

Dear Senator Coleman and Committee Members:

The greenest building is the one already built.

I strongly support and urge passage of the referenced bill, which would amend Section 29-401 of the Connecticut General Statutes (State Demolition Code) to require regulations for preventing the needless demolition of buildings. The purpose of the bill is to reduce needless energy and material wastes.

Many building materials are being reclaimed throughout the world, but in Connecticut much more could be done. In these energy conscious times, more buildings are being trashed than ever before. A major component of the large quantity of solid waste needing disposal is debris from whole building demolition and smaller demolitions during the course of alteration and repairs.

Instead of the ministerial duty currently imposed building officials to issue a demolition permit upon application by anyone licensed for demolition, **the bill should require that property owner or applicant for demolition demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the preferred action.** Thousands of tons a day of demolition debris are transported out-of-state because of inadequate landfill capacity for construction and demolition waste. Demolition waste is not minimized because there is no statutory obligation to consider alternatives, which include preservation, rehabilitation, reuse, deconstruction and reclamation of building materials such as timber, bricks and masonry.

Under Section 22a-19a of the General Statutes, an owner seeking to demolish a building listed or under consideration for listing on the National Historic Register must demonstrate no "feasible and prudent alternatives." See Attorney General Opinion 84-80; Hill/City Point Neighborhood Action Group, v. City of New Haven, 2000 WL 728841 (Conn.Sup.), 27 Conn. L. Rptr 206; Hill/City Point Neighborhood Action Group, v. City of New Haven, 2000 WL 1172327 (Conn. Sup.). But an exact replica of a historic building, which is not listed or eligible for listing on the Register, can be demolished without any consideration of alternatives. This is irrationally

wasteful and unnecessary and inconsistent with the goals of the DEP's Solid Waste Management Plan.

Therefore, I further recommend the transfer of all responsibilities for demolition from the Commissioner of Public Safety to the Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Materials and Waste Management. Only safety of demolition should remain with the Department of Public Safety.

In 1972, the Club of Rome shocked the world with a study titled *The Limits To Growth*. Two main conclusions were reached by this study. The first suggests that if economic-development-as-we-know-it continues, society will run out of nonrenewable resources before the year 2072 with the most probable result being "a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity." The second conclusion of the study is that piecemeal approaches to solving individual problems will not be successful.

Are we running out of oil? No. Are we running out of affordable oil? Probably. We are certainly running out of the cheap oil that has powered the world economy since the 1950s.

Consider the cumulative energy in equivalent barrels of oil that society needed in the past to build residential, commercial and industrial facilities. Embodied (accumulated) energy is the total quantity of energy required to manufacture, and supply to the point of use, a product, material or service and disposal. It includes the energy expended from cradle to grave for: extracting raw materials; transporting, manufacturing, assembling and installing a specific material to produce a service or product and finally its disassembly, deconstruction and/or decomposition. Demolishing useful buildings is **throwing oil into the landfill**.

The recycling protocol that was embodied in the sustainability clause - known as Agenda 21 - at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit gives priority to the preservation of energy content when reusing resources. Broadly speaking it states that if it takes more energy to reuse an item than it does to make a new one, then in energy terms it is better to make a new one and throw the old one away. This relates directly to the voluntary efforts being made to reduce the amount of fossil fuel expended on producing new materials, thereby reducing carbon dioxide emissions and so reducing global warming. The reasons for wanting to reduce global warming are primarily that future generations will have to cope with the considerable extra financial burden of minimizing the effects of climate change, not least of which will be rising sea and river levels, which will require reduction in land mass or the expense of increased flood protection schemes.

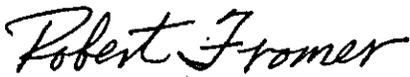
Here is a protocol with respect to the built environment that gives the following priority list for what to do with old architectural items:

1. Re-use a building without demolition or alteration. If this is not possible then:

2. Reclaim components in as intact a way as possible. Relocate entire buildings, reuse facades and structural elements, and reclaim whole features such as windows with their surrounds, shutters, and window furniture. Finally dismantle and reclaim the individual items that were used to assemble a building. If reclamation is not possible then:
3. Recycle and remanufacture a new product. Reclaimed wood can be recycled to make furniture, floorboards, etc. Concrete can be crushed to make recycled aggregate. Plastics can be remanufactured into new plastics products like polythene bags. If recycling is not an option then:
4. Beneficially destroy with energy recovery. Scrap wood and other carbon-based products can be used to fuel power plants, or for local heating or cooking. Methane can be recovered from landfill sites where carbon-based demolition waste has been tipped.

The Committee should encourage adoption of this sensible protocol in energy planning policy on demolition waste - **Reuse, Reclaim, Recycle, Destroy**. This would at least create the correct theoretical background for targeted efforts and practical measures.

Cordially,



Robert Fromer
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