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Planning and Development Committee

March 9, 2009

Testimony of Martin Mador

In Favor of

SB 1042 An Act Concerning Energy Efficient Developments

SB 1043 An Act Concerning Energy Efficiency Data for Proposed Subdivisions

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the Legislative and Political Chair of the Connecticut Sierra Club, and am here today representing our 10,000 Connecticut members concerned about the health of our environment, our economic prosperity, and our quality of life. I possess a Master's of Environmental Management degree from Yale. I am LEED accredited by the US Green Building Council.

SB 1042 and SB 1043 require that zoning and subdivision regulations call for permit applicants to demonstrate energy efficient design and promotion of solar energy techniques.

Energy has become an issue of prime national importance. It now figures prominently in residential and commercial utility bills; national economic security; state economic health; fossil fuel extraction, transportation and use; and, of course, CO₂ emissions and global warming.

Land use and construction have enormous energy implications. We are now looking at housing patterns and transportation costs (read: energy), and thus promoting Transit Oriented Development. Green Building design is (finally) perceived as critically significant in numerous ways, especially energy consumption, so we now mandate consideration of these protocols in a number of ways.

These two bills recognize that the energy consequences of land use development are important. They must be taken into account just as we have mandated consideration of such environmental issues as sedimentation and erosion and impervious cover.

SB 1042 is the stronger of the two bills, as it calls for energy efficient design as well as passive solar consideration. We suggest amending SB 1043 to include energy efficient design as well. For example, this would require a subdivision developer to consider building to residential green building design protocols, whether or not they are otherwise required.

We are just beginning the journey to substitute renewable/solar energy for fossil fuels. This process will certainly take several decades. We anticipate that it will take town planners and permit applicants some time to learn how to effectively incorporate energy issues in regulations and applications, but it is now the time to ensure that they do.

Sierra compliments the Committee on its recognition of the importance of energy issues in introducing these two bills. We consider these priority bills.