

Residence: 27 Kenwood Rd.
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Business: London & London
48 Christian Lane
Newington, CT 06111

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

Testimony of Joane Mueller-London opposing H.B. 5995:

As a representative of CAI-CT and a homeowner, I oppose H.B. 5995 as currently written for the following reasons:

- ◆ Restrictions on the use of clothes lines currently in place promote the aesthetics of the community, uphold resident's expectations, and protect property values that support the municipal tax base.
- ◆ A balancing of interests is required, and while the energy conservation goal of H.B. 5995 is laudable, its approach, in language and tone, is quite heavy-handed and will surely result in a backlash.
- ◆ Community associations by their nature are self-governing. Before buying into a community, owners read the governing rules and regulations and knowingly sign on to them. These rules and regulations ensure the maintenance of an orderly, civil, and responsible community, where neighbors living in close proximity to one another are solicitous, mindful and respectful of each other. These are civic values the legislature should promote, not denigrate.
- ◆ Condominium communities are not uniform in design or land area. Many communities are high-rise buildings, such as River Point in East Hartford or the Bushnell Towers in Hartford. They simply do not have the physical space to accommodate outdoor clothes lines.
- ◆ Not everyone wants to look at their neighbor's linens, night gowns and underwear.
- ◆ Contrary to the drum beat of the hard core environmental community, laundry hanging on a clothes line is not necessarily always beautiful. Clean, crisp white sheets strung on a well-maintained clothes line on a large open space of farmland next to a beautiful farm house might indeed evoke nostalgic images of childhood. But smelly, dirty dish rags, torn and faded, strung along a rope on someone's balcony, and that never come down, could quickly become a blight on an otherwise sophisticated urban landscape. Many condos are adjacent to business districts. Most retail merchants would agree that laundry on a clothes line does not enhance the customer's shopping experience.
- ◆ Passage of this type of legislation will promote dissension and litigation within the community, and the cost of administration and litigation will be passed on to homeowners, who can least afford it in these difficult economic times.
- ◆ Consistent with democratic, self-governing principles, unit owners should be allowed to vote on allowing clothes lines to the extent their respective communities have space for them. This legislation denies them that right to vote.
- ◆ Promotion of the use of indoor drying racks and energy saving appliances, updating windows, furnaces, and insulation, and lowering indoor temperatures in the winter are all ways to save and conserve energy while still maintaining the aesthetics of the community.