



**TESTIMONY
BART RUSSELL
CT COUNCIL OF SMALL TOWNS
BEFORE THE
HOUSING COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 17, 2009**

RE: HB-5525 AN ACT CONCERNING EXEMPTIONS TO THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING LAND USE APPEALS PROCESS.

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) *supports* **HB-5525, An Act Concerning Exemptions to the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Process**, which amends Section 8-30g of the general statutes by exempting towns and cities that establish a housing incentive zone from the affordable housing land use appeals process.

The Housing Incentive Zone program is a positive step in encouraging towns to develop affordable housing. It creates a process that allows towns to proactively shape how affordable housing will fit into the economic development and housing goals of their communities, consistent with the environmental and land use goals reflected in their local Plans of Conservation and Development. By exempting towns and cities that create housing incentives zones from the affordable housing appeals process, HB-5525 provides a powerful incentive to municipalities to establish housing incentive programs, which will be much more successful in meeting the state's affordable housing goals than the contentious and costly affordable housing appeals process.

COST urges your support for HB-5525.