

Testimony of Lawrence Gorham
HB 5479, An Act Concerning Considerations in Affordable Housing Appeals
Planning and Development Committee
March 2, 2011

Small towns in Connecticut need relief from affordable housing law 8-30g, specifically in proposed Bill 5479. Existing law is heavily skewed toward developers by throwing local zoning regulations out the window.

One absurd implication of 8-30g is that practically any three-bedroom house in any small-town neighborhood can currently be replaced by a three-family affordable housing apartment building. Proposed change 5479 would simply allow a judge to consider additional reasonable arguments by a zoning commission during appeal. Public health and safety are about all that are currently allowed.

This is a small-town problem; cities are exempt from 8-30g because they had the population density and money and were able to build enough federally designated housing. There are many reasonable developers currently with excellent 8-30g projects under way that will benefit our towns. However, unscrupulous developers try to leverage these same towns into nonconforming projects by threatening unreasonable 8-30g projects. It takes great courage and determination to withstand this onslaught.

Current law is complicated, requiring countless hours of unpaid preparation time for commissioners and big budgets for highly paid attorneys. All this places an unreasonable burden on our towns, so please support proposed Bill 5479 and allow a Judge to consider all information relevant to a project in our neighborhoods.

Respectfully yours,

Lawrence Gorham
Ledyard