



**HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

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*Your Home  
Is Our  
Business*

February 18, 2011

To: Senator Steve Cassano, Co-Chairman  
Representative Linda M. Gentile, Co-Chairman  
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Bill Ethier, Chief Executive Officer

Re: Senate Bill 487, An Act Prohibiting Local Building Standards

**The HBA of Connecticut is a professional trade association with 1,100 member firms statewide, employing tens of thousands of Connecticut citizens. Our members, all small businesses, are residential and commercial builders, land developers, home improvement contractors, trade contractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry. Our members build 70% to 80% of all new homes and apartments in the state each year.**

**We strongly support SB 487 to stop or prevent a dangerous trend of municipal governments creating building construction standards that are contrary to the State Building Code.**

**Connecticut has had a statewide building code since 1970. While municipalities enforce the State Building Code through local building officials, towns and cities are not allowed to vary the State Building Code. Also, the only official interpretation of State Building Code provisions, or modifications of same, can be done by the State Building Inspector. Local building officials cannot impose their own interpretations nor can they modify the code. Our statewide building code is one of the few regulatory positives in Connecticut regarding building construction.**

**However, some towns do impose construction standards, either through zoning or subdivision regulations or municipal ordinances, that differ from or exceed State Building Code provisions, such as mandatory fire sprinkler installation in a single-family home, or green building requirements exceeding the code. The only way to challenge this is to bring legal action, which is not a viable option in most cases, and particularly for home builders. The legal costs simply do not justify any savings if such a lawsuit is won. Therefore, the statutes need to be reinforced with language specifically prohibiting the practice. This bill impacts only the actual construction requirements of a home or building that are covered by the State Building Code; it does not impact zoning and subdivision requirements regarding the placement of a building on a lot, side-yard or setback distances, signage, etc., or even colors and aesthetics that might be controlled in a historic or village district zone. **If this legislation not adopted, the trend of local adoption of building construction requirements could mushroom, destroying one of the few economic development and construction regulatory benefits in CT. Please support SB 487.** Thank you for considering our comments on this legislation.**

*"Leading Our Members to Professional Excellence."*

**Serving the Residential Development & Construction Industry Through Advocacy, Education & Networking**