

Connecticut Preservation Action

Planning and Development Committee Public Hearing
Wednesday, March 21, 2012

In Support of the Raised Bill 5537

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PROPERTY TAX PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC BARNES.

Connecticut Preservation Action is a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization which supports historic preservation initiatives on the statewide and national levels. We are in strong support of this enabling legislation which would allow municipalities to pursue a strategy of preservation of Connecticut's rural heritage and its very-much-still-alive farming culture.

This measure fits as a logical accompaniment to our open space and farmland preservation policies. What sense does it make to save landscapes without the essential infrastructure that made them—the historic farmhouse, the barns, stone walls, and gardens. What context is lost when the barn is bulldozed away from an 18th century farmhouse? How does one explain tobacco farming in the Connecticut valley when there are no sheds to anchor the fields?

People love places—WHOLE places. Imagine Old Wethersfield without its cove or New Haven without its green. The same is true of hundreds of scenic historic views across our state if you allow the barns to disappear through disregard or neglect.

Barns can also help us achieve a future which includes sustainability, local food supply, creative small business, and smart growth. Supporting this measure will help protect agricultural economies, boost tourism, and attract investment.

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation has pursued a goal for several years now of holding up our barns for appreciation. Disappearing at an alarming rate from demolition by neglect as well as demolition for other use of the property, barns are a potent symbol of our New England past. We applaud them for their creative foresight.

Anita L. Mielert
President, CT Preservation Action