



## Town of Fairfield

Office of the First Selectman  
Fairfield, Connecticut 06824

Michael C. Tetreau  
First Selectman

Sullivan Independence Hall  
725 Old Post Road

February 14, 2013

Dear Members of the Connecticut State Legislative Housing Committee:

My name is Michael C. Tetreau and I am the First Selectman of the Town of Fairfield. While I am unable to attend today's hearing in person, I am writing in support of efforts to amend Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Let me first say that I support the spirit of 8-30g and efforts to create affordable housing in my community and throughout the State. It is vitally important that we provide a full range of housing options, and that we have housing that is affordable to our young people, our working families and our senior populations. However, I have also seen the unintended consequences of this law, as some unscrupulous developers have used it to threaten towns and to try to subvert land use regulations, not so much out of a desire to create real affordable housing, but out of pure greed.

Fairfield, like many cities and towns throughout our State, is a fairly mature, developed community. There are few remaining open tracts of land suitable for new housing development, and new housing production over the last decade has averaged only 60 units per year. Is it realistic, therefore, to set a threshold of ten percent in order to achieve the affordable housing goals outlined in the statute? If a goal is not clearly defined, measurable and attainable, how effective is that goal?

In Fairfield, we have made strides in developing affordable housing, including most recently, enactment of inclusionary zoning in the vicinity of a new train station which requires that ten percent of all residential units be set aside to persons or families at or below eighty percent of the area median income. The Town has had to be creative and flexible. Often, this has required the Town to appropriate funds for this purpose, such as when the Town bonded \$7 million to acquire a former military housing site which was later converted into 22 affordable home ownership units and 8 units of permanent supportive housing. To be sure, there is still work to be done to meet the needs of our citizens, but this effort is clearly not a one size fits all approach.

I support reasonable, common sense legislation to reform this law. Several of the bills before you merit serious consideration. Given demographic trends and our aging population, I see no reason why affordable elderly housing units should not be counted the same as other affordable units, such as being proposed in HB 5626. I support efforts to require affordable units in set-aside developments to remain affordable in perpetuity, rather than allow these restrictions to sunset after forty years, as is being proposed in HB 5060 and 5430. I agree with the proponents of HB 5501 that there should be penalties for those who willfully ignore existing deed restrictions and engage in the sale or subletting of affordable units at levels that are no longer affordable.

Lastly, I support efforts to exempt municipalities from 8-30g applications where such applications do not conform to a municipality's affordable housing plan and where such municipalities have demonstrated a commitment to affordable housing, as exemplified in proposed HB 5625.

Section 8-30g does have its place, but it is an imperfect and rather blunt instrument for achieving the goal of creating more affordable housing. I believe that enactment of common-sense reforms will enable communities to respond more effectively and ultimately create more affordable housing to meet the needs of its citizens.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike", written in a cursive style.

Michael C. Tetreau  
First Selectman