



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877 203-431-2766

February 13, 2013

Housing Committee of the CT General Assembly
Room 2700, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Proposed Bill No. 6121
AFFORDABLE HOUSING – Protection of Watersheds

To the Members of the Committee:

Representative John Frey of Ridgefield has proposed Bill No. 6121, “To require developers of affordable housing to protect water resources.” This bill would amend §8-30g “to require affordable housing developments that contain any land within a watershed area to have a density of not more than one unit per two acres.” This is particularly important for public water supply watersheds, and the bill may be modified to focus on those watersheds that contribute directly to an identified public water supply.

This bill is consistent with the recommendations in the 2005-2010 Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, (State C&D Plan), carried forward in the Draft Plan for 2013-2018. In reviewing a large development planned for the Town of Ridgefield in 2007, Lori Mathieu, Supervisor of the Source Water Protection Unit for the State of CT Department of Public Health (now serving as Public Health Section Chief), stated that the Plan “recommends that intensive development be guided away from existing and potential water supply watersheds and aquifers, and that consideration be given to the cumulative effects of incremental growth in state, regional, and local planning programs and regulations.”

In her comments to Ridgefield, Ms. Mathieu cites the policies of two other important State documents entitled *Protecting Connecticut's Water Supply Watersheds: A Guide for Local Officials* and *Carrying Capacity of Public Water Supply Watersheds: A Literature Review of Impacts on Water Quality From Residential Development*. In comments that are today pertinent to Representative Frey's proposed bill, Ms. Mathieu said, “It is the state's source water protection policies that have protected and preserved drinking water quality of Connecticut's sources of public drinking water for the last thirty years.” This legacy of protecting the public health should not be compromised by State laws, affordable housing or otherwise, that are contrary to these important State policies.

According to Ms. Mathieu, the State Department of Public Health policy (the Committee should seek further confirmation from the DOH on this point) recommends that, in watershed areas that contribute to public water supply sources, “Use of minimum sustainable lot sizes of **two or more acres** should adequately protect public drinking water supplies while allowing community growth.”

Developers of large-scale affordable housing projects may try to diminish the importance of the DOH position by pointing out that the referenced State documents are merely “policies” and “guidelines”, but of what purpose is a policy or guideline if it is ignored or compromised by contradictory State laws?

Affordable housing should be of primary concern to all communities in the State, but allowing high density development in public water supply watersheds contradicts important State policies intended to protect the public health and valuable sources of public drinking water.

I urge the Housing Committee to seriously consider Proposed Bill No. 6121.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,



Betty Brosius, MPA, AICP
Director of Planning, Ridgefield

cc: Rep. John Frey
Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission
First Selectman Rudy Marconi
Lori Mathieu, CTDOH