

FIRST SELECTMAN'S OFFICE

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February 5, 2015

MEMO

To: Members of the Housing Committee

From: Matthew Knickerbocker
First Selectman, Town of Bethel

Re: Testimony in Support of HB-6128 (LCO No. 02329)

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Affordable housing is a serious problem for the future of our state. In order to continue to revitalize our state's economy, it is essential that we find the means to provide affordable housing options to support and grow our business base. Connecticut can never have a truly healthy economy if rank and file workers cannot afford to live here and we continue to lose young college graduates to other states due to the high cost of living in Connecticut.

Yet, as important as this goal is, the current language in CGS 8-30g, however well intentioned, falls short of achieving its stated purpose. Current law places an undue burden on some communities due to the inability to apply current housing stock toward the calculations needed to meet affordable housing goals. Plus, current regulations leave some communities vulnerable to development tactics in which affordable housing laws are used solely for the purpose of circumventing local zoning and land use ordinances, thereby depriving the community of the ability to control its own development. For affordable housing laws to achieve their goal, these problems must be addressed.

Many well crafted bills designed to correct these problems have already been introduced in the 2015 legislative session. I write to you today in support of proposed House Bill no. 6128, which is comprehensive in its

approach. HB-6128 provides the following critically important enhancements to the affordable housing statutes:

1. Recognizes senior citizen housing in affordable housing calculations
2. Recognizes current stock (constructed before July 1, 1990) in affordable housing calculations.
3. Requires designated affordable housing units to remain designated as such in perpetuity.
4. Provides a greater level of local control over development through moratoriums, as well as reducing the potential for abuse of affordable housing laws, for communities with clear commitments to increasing affordable housing opportunities.

With a large number of similar bills to consider, I am sure the committee will need to consider consolidating and blending many of the provisions of the various bills. I respectfully request that the committee maintain the critically important elements outlined above in the final version of the bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Matthew S. Knickerbocker
First Selectman – Bethel

CC: Board of Selectmen
Planning & Zoning Board