

Testimony for the Public Hearing on Affordable Housing to be held on February 5, 2015

I am writing to request that affordable housing legislation be re-considered to provide communities that struggle with current quotas some leeway in protecting and maintaining the character of the surrounding neighborhood. I feel the homeowners in rural/suburban communities value the character of their surroundings and want to maintain the comfort that that "sense of place" provides them as well as protect their property investment. I have watched as developers use the threat of 8-30g over the heads of local land-use officials in order to bully them into giving in to their demands. I do not believe that that was, in any way, the original intent of the affordable housing regulation, but nevertheless it has provided substantial benefit to developers who merely seek to profit while neighboring homeowners are left to live with the results. This is an egregious affront to long-standing tax-paying citizens who find themselves with little to no recourse. Over and over again, developers utilize 8-30g as a veiled threat to force local communities to give in to their demands.

I recently learned that many of the more affordable homes in my community are not even considered as "affordable stock" in calculating how much housing in the town is considered "affordable" because of a deed restriction requirement that, for example, excludes people who live in senior housing or in mobile homes. In my opinion, this represents a gross oversight and should be reconsidered.

Thank you for your willingness to review and consider re-writing parts of a law that is over 30 years old. I ask that you find a way to balance the needs of the neighboring homeowners with the need for affordable housing in these communities.

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