

## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO H.B. NO. 5363

By Bryan K. Atherton, CCIM

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Good afternoon Senator Winfield, Representative Butler and members of the Housing Committee. My name is Bryan Atherton and I am the Owner of Atherton & Associates Real Estate Investment firm. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you in strong opposition to House Bill 5363, An Act Concerning the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure.

I am a practicing developer in favor of promoting affordable housing throughout the State of Connecticut. The Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Act, General Statutes 8-30g, was adopted to address the effects of rising home prices on affordable workforce housing. Since its inception in Connecticut General Statute, 8-30g has spurred the construction of no less than 4,000 deed-restricted affordable units. However, Connecticut still has a long way to go to remedy the lack of affordable housing and its effects. From 1990-2010, Connecticut lost a higher percentage of the millennial (25 to 34 year-old) workforce than all but two other states. Millennials carry enormous debt due to the rising cost of education and are therefore delaying many of the milestones enjoyed by previous generations, most notably home ownership.

As a practicing commercial broker and Consultant, I understand the role affordable housing plays in relation to our state and local economies. I understand the linkages these types of developments create to Retail, Industrial and Office uses. Large corporations are drawn to areas where they can be assured of affordable housing for their workforce. Affordable housing is also an integral part of the survival of small businesses.

As a developer, I believe Connecticut General Statute 8-30g is an important aspect of our housing laws for instances when all options have been exhausted to work within the parameters outlined by the Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) program. The IHZ program provides municipalities with control over many aspects of a development project, including location, size, and design. I believe the proposed legislation would weaken the current 8-30g statute and municipalities would be far less inclined to participate in the IHZ program. The IHZ program is a proven tool in the development of affordable housing which leads to inclusive collaboration between developers and municipalities.

The current demand for affordable housing and the state's need to meet that demand can't be weakened by the detrimental changes being proposed to Connecticut General Statute 8-30g in this proposed bill. It would be counterproductive to enact legislation that would further encumber the process for developing much needed affordable housing that will lead to smart growth throughout the state of Connecticut.