



Connecticut
Housing
Coalition

Date: March 1, 2016

To: Hon. Gary Holder Winfield, Co-Chair
Hon. Larry Butler, Co-Chair
Members of the Housing Committee

From: Jude Carroll, Community Development Specialist, Connecticut Housing Coalition

Re: **HB 5363—An Act Concerning the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure**

Good evening Senator Winfield, Representative Butler, and members of the Housing Committee. My name is Jude Carroll; I'm the Community Development Specialist at the Connecticut Housing Coalition. The Coalition represents the broad, vibrant network of community-based affordable housing activity that is happening across the state. Our more than 250 member organizations include nonprofit developers, human service agencies, resident associations, and diverse other housing practitioners and advocates. Founded in 1981, the Coalition works to expand housing opportunity and to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in Connecticut.

I'm here to testify in opposition to HB 5363, a proposed bill that would alter the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Process or § 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Housing Coalition opposes the proposal for one very simple yet compelling reason: Connecticut is a very long way from meeting the need for affordable housing in every city and town in the state. And the statute is working.

It's important to put our discussion today in context.

In Connecticut, rents continue to rise and the incomes of working households stagnate. Affordable housing helps people get and keep a roof over their heads.

Yet only a handful of communities have an adequate supply of affordable housing. If we look at the stock of affordable rental homes by town, we see that there are very few communities that have reached the affordable housing land use threshold of 10 percent. According to the 2014 Affordable Housing Appeals List, only 31 towns across the state have at least 10 percent of their housing stock categorized as affordable, leaving 138 towns reporting less than 10 percent. In fact, 12 towns have less than 1 percent of their housing units affordable.

Gap between Need and Supply

The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that Connecticut needs to build or rehab over 90,000 affordable units to meet current need. Of course, the gap between need and supply varies by household income, being greatest among those with extremely low income. In 2014, there were 102 available affordable units for every 100 renter households with income under 80 percent AMI or \$54,404 annually. You would think from that ratio that Connecticut does not have an affordable housing problem. However, among very low-income and extremely low-income renter households, we see a different story. Across the state, there were only 64 available, affordable units for every 100 very low-income households (income less than \$34,000 annually) and only 37 available, affordable units for every 100 extremely low-income renter households (income less than \$20,500 annually). Annual median income in 2013, the most recent year for available data, was \$68,130 in Connecticut.

Connecticut's Home-Building Record

In 2011, Connecticut ranked 50th among all state, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico for the number of multi-family units built per capita.

8-30g Is Working

Slowly but surely § 8-30g is working. The count of deed-restricted housing units that are subject to maximum price or rent restrictions which satisfy § 8-30g standards, among the state's 169 towns, is now at 5,858. The current statewide stock of "assisted units" has increased by about 25,000 since the statute's inception in 1992. Those units are home for working families, seniors, young adults just starting out, people with disabilities, veterans and others who make a community vibrant.

There are many success stories in towns where § 8-30g construction was well designed and town decision makers and those who keep their communities safe have admitted that anticipated problems never became reality. In fact, many town officials believe these developments have had a positive impact on the community.

I've included a series of pictures that illustrate the quality of these developments at the end of my testimony.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon.

Photos of 8-30g Developed Properties by Town



Old Farms Crossing, Avon



Arbor Commons, Berlin



Lexington Meadows, Bethel



Brookfield Crossing, Brookfield



Summerdale, North Haven



Old Oak Village, Wallingford



Flagg Road Cooperative, West Hartford