



# FIRST SELECTMAN'S OFFICE

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March 4, 2016

TO: The Planning and Development Committee

Re: **Testimony in Opposition to 5483**

Dear Sen. Osten, Sen. Linares, Rep. Miller, Rep. Aman and Members of the Committee:

As I am unable to testify in person, I write to you today in opposition to 5483, an act that would weaken the 500' buffer zone between newly proposed crematoriums and property zoned for residential use. This bill weakens the buffer by exempting properties that are "town-owned and undeveloped". There are factors related to this proposal that I urge the committee to consider with great caution and skepticism.

First, the fact that property owned by a municipality is "undeveloped" at any particular point in time does not in any way mean that it will remain so. Weakening the buffer zone in this manner could, depending on public opinion, render the property useless by drastically degrading its future value, even for recreational use.

Second, and perhaps just as importantly, this bill appears to have been crafted for the purpose of affecting the outcome of one particular land use case. The Town of Bethel currently has three pending zoning appeals in process that relate directly to the purpose of 5483. Passage of bill has a strong potential to materially affect the outcome of these appeals. Furthermore, this bill was submitted without notice to or consultation with Bethel's land use authorities. In fact, the town's Planning and Zoning officials are unable to comment on this proposed bill due to pending appeals before them.

For the reasons above, passage of this bill is extremely unwise at this point in time. I urge the Committee to reject this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew S. Knickerbocker  
First Selectman, Town of Bethel