



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – MARCH 14, 2022

TESTIMONY OF CAROL PLATT LIEBAU, PRESIDENT

HB 5429 – AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

This bill would override local land-use processes in each Connecticut town with, or near, a mass-transit station in pursuit of denser housing development.

Local decision-making processes generally improve outcomes both locally and statewide. They maximize public input, allowing residents to suggest improvements and even correct mistakes. Debating controversial issues in local communities, rather than in Hartford, lowers the temperature around state government and permits more citizens to have a voice in the way their government is run.

Overriding local control is an absolute last resort. Although proponents have framed matters around housing with crisis-level rhetoric, bills like this one reflect a laser-focus on pre-determined “solutions” instead of building understanding or consensus around the root causes of the problem. For instance, discussions about Connecticut housing costs rarely confront how the high cost of local government inflates rents, or the fact that one of the state’s key measures for affordability disregards housing built before 1990.

The changes proposed in HB 5429 could be adopted through local ordinances and processes. The existing system in Connecticut towns and cities allows everyone with suggestions for reform to make their case to local elected bodies and persuade others in the marketplace of ideas. This legislation treats the General Assembly as a public policy Walmart that would force through sweeping changes in bulk.

Given the direct and significant impact of the proposed legislation on people’s lives across the state, it’s wrong simply to impose a one-size-fits-all solution from the state capitol. The bill should be rejected.