



Betsy Gara
Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the Housing Committee
February 28, 2023

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) **OPPOSES** certain provisions included in **HB-6781 - AN ACT ADDRESSING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY FOR RESIDENTS IN THE STATE.**

As drafted, HB-6781, Section 24, eliminates the requirement that municipalities prepare an Affordable Housing Plan and update the plan every five years under Sec. 8-30j, Connecticut General Statutes (CGS). Instead, it replaces the existing planning requirement with a requirement to adopt a plan “to affirmatively further fair housing for the municipality”.

Municipalities have invested considerable time and resources in developing affordable housing plans, including performing housing needs assessments and identifying barriers to affordable housing. We are concerned that HB-6781 ignores these planning efforts and, instead, imposes a duplicative and confusing planning requirement on municipalities.

Under existing law, municipalities are required in their planning and zoning laws to “affirmatively further fair housing”. This has long been required under the federal Fair Housing Act and recently codified in Connecticut statute under Public Act 21-29. Accordingly, mandating that municipalities develop a plan to affirmatively further fair housing is unnecessary. It is also confusing given the other state and federal laws governing fair housing issues.

Municipalities and regional Councils of Government are devoting significant time and resources in performing affordable housing needs assessments and developing and updating plans, which will provide municipalities with a strong foundation for supporting more affordable housing to meet the needs of their communities. COST is concerned that HB-6781 undermines these efforts.

In addition, COST is actively participating in the Commission on Connecticut’s Future and Development which is charged with developing recommendations to advance the state’s affordable housing goals. COST sits on the Commission’s Affordable Housing Plan Working Group which has recently finalized its recommendations relative to affordable housing plans.

These comprehensive, stakeholder driven efforts are the appropriate mechanism for developing recommendations to promote affordable housing.

COST urges lawmakers to OPPOSE HB-6781.

Connecticut Council of Small Towns
1245 Farmington Ave., 101
West Hartford, CT 06107
Tel. 860-676-0770; bgara@ctcost.org
www.ctcost.org