

Dear Chairs and Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I am providing testimony on HB 6890- AN ACT CONCERNING QUALIFYING TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES.

Transit Oriented Communities have been an important discussion in many communities, especially in coastal Fairfield County where housing density is already tight and Fairfield County overall - where property values and land costs are much higher than other areas of the state. Unfortunately, despite the possible good intentions of this proposal, it will restrict or eliminate the ability of locally elected officials to regulate housing density in their community by creating "as of right" housing based on various data interpreted by bureaucrats in Hartford and pushed by activist like DesegregateCT. For example, as a "Qualifying Rapid Transit Community," Wilton would be required to have a minimum net density of 20 homes per acre within one half-mile of the train station.

Activists claim that this bill is a carrot approach. However, it is really a heavy handed **Stick**: this bill limits the ability of municipalities to receive discretionary grants for transportation, water and wastewater infrastructure, brownfields remediation, revitalization funds and other related funding unless they adhere to certain rigid "transit-oriented community" requirements.

I have testified on similar bills in the Housing Committee that would force state mandates or take away local control of our elected planning and zoning officials. Did you know that Wilton is served by diesel trains. Running more often to accommodate all this new density would be horrible for our environment.

Wallethub just identified CT as the 2nd highest taxed state in the US after Illinois. When I look at our 3rd grade reading and math scores around the state, New Haven has 84% of its student not reading at grade level and math scores that are just as shocking. Most days we read in the news about companies moving out of our state not moving in and we have net outmigration of our residents as reported by United Van Lines.

Westcog and CCM have done great work on identifying the issues that must be solved before addressing housing in our state.

We must not force development, but we need you to address the need for CT to be more affordable. Eliminate all the duplicative and ineffective programs. Address the cost of utilities. Fund our towns properly so our property taxes can be lower. Hold our schools accountable to educating the children they are being funded by our tax dollars. Create an environment that supports a strong economy.

Burdening our municipalities with more "sticks" and mandates will destroy them eventually. Let's focus on making our cities' cleaner, safer and more desirable. It will be a win- win for CT.

I urge you to vote no on HB 6890.

Thank you

Kim Healy
Wilton, CT

