

Government Administration and Elections Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-351

AN ACT INCREASING FUNDING FOR THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Title: ACCOUNT.

Vote Date: 3/15/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/8/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration & Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

To increase funding for the Community Investment Account through a \$5 increase in the fee for land recordings to help fund community investment and development projects.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

No administration/agency sources were provided.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

John Baldwin, Vice President, Canterbury Historical Society: Supports this bill because of the great number of historical records and locations that its funding has helped to preserve. States that the bill would help ease the burden of costs for those looking to preserve historical sites, and that the current funding for the account is inadequate to achieve their goals. Also states that the bill would have a great impact on our ability to protect the culture and history of this state.

Robert Tod Bryant, President, Norwalk Preservation Trust: Supports this bill because the small increase in the recording fee would strengthen communities across the state by increasing funding to preserve various sites. States that this bill would help support historical preservation, affordable housing, open space preservation, and farmland preservation, all of which are vital to Connecticut's well-being.

Leah Glaser, Professor of History, Central Connecticut State University: Supports this bill because it is important to ensure there is funding available for communities to preserve and restore historic sites. States that this bill would reduce the amount of demolition of historic buildings, which is both a waste and an affront to the history and culture of a place. Also states that it is important to include affordable housing in this funding to ensure that people can live in the communities this bill intends to preserve.

John Harrington: Supports this bill because the costs associated with preservation have increased with inflation and the funds originally allocated by this account are no longer adequate. States that passing this bill would help ensure that the important work done to preserve historical aspects of communities can continue.

Aaron Marcavitch, Board President, Connecticut Preservation Action: Supports this bill because the Community Investment Account has been critical to supporting the preservation of historical sites. States that so far over 1,400 projects have been supported by this account and ensuring that adequate funding is available will only benefit towns who are looking to restore or preserve a site.

Joan Nichols, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau: Supports this bill because farmers have been greatly helped by the CIA since its implementation, especially through the Dairy Support program. States that the bill would help adequately fund the account to compensate for the increased costs needed to complete certain projects.

Eliza Paterson, Policy Associate, American Farmland Trust: Supports this bill because it would result in around \$2 million added to the overall account fund, which will help farmers provide healthy and locally grown and raised products to Connecticut residents. States that ensuring that additional resources are available for farmland preservation and farmers, the strength of Connecticut farms can be maintained and improved upon, therefore helping everyone in the state who buy their products.

Charlotte Rea, President, New Haven Preservation Trust: Supports this bill because funding from the CIA ensures that the Preservation Trust can have a Director of Preservation to advise various stakeholders in the preservation process to ensure that the process is done correctly and is representative of the goals of the community. States that a modest increase in fees to fund this account would greatly support Preservation Trusts throughout the state.

Chelsea Ross, Executive Director, Partnership for Strong Communities: Supports this bill because it will increase funding needed for affordable housing and homelessness services. States that Connecticut is moving in the wrong direction in terms of housing costs and that renters are increasingly burdened by these costs, thus increasing their risk of becoming homeless. States that this bill would give the Department of Housing more funding to address the needs of these people and prevent more residents from going homeless.

Caroline Sloat, Board Chair, Preservation Connecticut: Supports this bill because it would increase the resources available to preservation trusts to provide expertise to undertake expensive repairs. States that this bill would address the economic needs of underserved communities that have ageing structures that need to be restored in a timely manner.

John Stone, Secretary, Stamford Land Conservation Trust: Supports this bill because open land in Connecticut is disappearing, and the funding provided in this bill would provide more protection for open land and watershed areas, which is greatly needed in these difficult economic times.

Amanda Thompson, President, Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy: Supports this bill because the CIA has given the Conservancy the opportunity in the past to purchase open land and use it as a community garden. States that increased funding for this program will only help to strengthen community investment in the future.

Christopher Wigren: Supports this bill because the Community Investment Account already serves an important purpose of historical preservation and investment in open space. States that this bill would address the rising costs of preservation by increasing the amount of funding available.

Marguerite Carnell, Architectural Historian: Supports this bill because the Community Investment account has already provided immense benefits to communities in terms of funding for historical preservation. States that these projects bring in a strong return on investment by producing more jobs, income-generating locations, and more tax revenues for local governments.

Lori Fusco, Chair, Wilton Historic District and Historic Property Commission: Supports this bill because it provides additional funding for "circuit riders" who oversee and give advice to those working on historical preservation and renovation projects. States that the support of these individuals has allowed them to implement well-thought-out strategies on preservation and ensuring the long-term investment in preserving cultural legacy.

Jessica Glass, Board of Directors President, Wood Memorial Library & Museum: Supports this bill because the library and museum required significant renovations that would not have been possible without the Historic Restoration Fund. States that this bill would help communities secure critical funding for renovation and preservation projects that benefit the community and those seeking new learning opportunities.

Michael Krenesky, Selectman & Municipal Historian, Town of Beacon Falls: Supports this bill because small towns are often unable to preserve historical locations due to a lack of funding. States that the CIA is necessary to ensure that the town can take on a schoolhouse restoration project, and that this bill to increase funding would allow them to continue to preserve and restore these rare historic sites.

Jane Montanaro, Executive Director, Preservation Connecticut: Supports this bill because the Community Investment Account has already shown to be successful, providing much needed resources for local restoration and preservation projects that have increased the cultural preservation of historical sites. States that the bill would increase funding for this account, thus supporting the continued work done by those looking to preserve historical sites as well as open space preservation and use.

Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director, CT Land Conservation Council: Supports this bill because the CIA has been vital to achieving the goal of historical restoration, open space preservation, farmland preservation and affordable housing. This bill would increase funding

for the account and in turn leave more money available for communities looking to invest in these areas.

Edith Pestana: Supports this bill because increased funding for the Community Investment Account will help generate tourism and maintain historical buildings, which are critical for certain communities to preserve their cultural history. States that an unfortunate example of delayed funding hurting historical sites is the First Congregational Church in New London, and that increasing the funding for this account will help avoid those situations.

Winnie Seibert, Guilford Keeping Society: Supports this bill because it will help preserve the heritage of the state which is a draw for tourists.

Antoinette Spinelli, Co-Legislative Chair, CT Town Clerks Association: Supports the intent of this bill but requests that the \$1 of the recording fee allocated to the town clerks to maintain the recording of information be increased. Specifically suggests that the land recording fee be established at \$6 with \$1 going to the town clerk and \$5 going to the CIA.

Nancy Strong, Strong Family Farm: Supports this bill because her family farm has benefited from the Community Investment Act by being able to receive preservation grants from the CT Farmland Trust. States that the funding of this account needs to be increased due to increasing costs association with preservation.

Louise Wagner, Board Trustee, Property Chair, Newtown Historical Society: Supports this bill because it is important for communities to engage in historical preservation, which the Community Investment Account allows them to do.

Brian Smith, Preservation CT: Supports this bill because increasing funding for the Community Investment Account will help advance the cause of historical preservation and protection.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Linda Dalessio, Dr: Opposes this bill because Connecticut residents deserve to have a full audit completed by a third party to determine exactly where this money is going. States that we do not need another slush fund that will not benefit CT residents. The audit must also determine whether communities are benefiting from this account.

Reported by: Gabriel Marques, Assistant Clerk Date: 3/19/2024