



Connecticut

Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association

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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

PROPOSED H.B. 5411 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON PROPERTY TAX BURDENS AND SMART GROWTH INCENTIVES

SUMMARY: The proposed bill recommends increased State funding for open space and agricultural land preservation and remediation of contaminated properties.

ANALYSIS: Open space preservation is an effective growth management tool, improving opportunities for towns to protect natural resources, recreational opportunities, and local landscape features, including farms. Open space protection can also be a tool for managing the potential fiscal impacts of residential growth. Restoring and reusing previously contaminated sites is an essential public health goal for the State as well as a key economic development opportunity in many Connecticut towns and cities.

Together, these two strategies constitute key components of an integrated smart growth planning strategy for maintaining Connecticut's unique character and high quality of life. Evaluation of the potential benefits of these investment strategies would be improved by the application of other planning tools under discussion in proposed legislation, specifically coordinated GIS capability at all levels of government and analyses of development potential and impacts.

Tools and resources for implementing smart growth strategies, such as this legislation anticipates, will support implementation of effective growth management principles.

FISCAL IMPACT: Fiscal impacts to municipalities due to the proposed planning actions cannot be calculated at this time.

CCAPA POSITION: The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association supports the drafting of legislation to further the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission Report, including specifically funding for open space protection and contaminated site remediation. We believe and recommend that State investment in growth management strategies, along with the provision of necessary planning tools and resources, should be addressed within an integrated growth management program and we look forward to working with the Committee to consolidate these concepts into comprehensive legislation.