



Connecticut

Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association

Government Relations Chairman: Christopher S. Wood, AICP
Phone: 203 558-0654 woodplanning@charter.net www.ccapa.org

FEBRUARY 23, 2007

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

PUBLIC HEARING: RAISED BILL – 7149

AN ACT CONCERNING HOUSING FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

SUMMARY: HB-7149, if enacted, would establish a process, mechanisms and financial incentives to encourage municipalities to provide opportunities for the private market to build housing that working families and individuals can afford.

CCAPA POSITION: CCAPA is on record supporting an incentive based approach to creating affordable housing. We believe the creation of more housing units affordable to working class individuals and families is critical for long term economic growth, social equity, responsible development, and vibrant and healthy communities. We have also supported the concept of an incentive based approach which includes technical assistance to municipalities for creating development and design regulations to create affordable housing compatible with their communities; more aggressive State level planning and policy guidance and assistance for creating housing; and financial incentives that reward municipalities for providing the foundation to encourage and support new affordable, mixed income workforce housing.

While the affordable housing problem may be more severe in certain housing markets in the state, housing affordability is a problem throughout Connecticut. The high cost of land, labor, and materials, the regulatory approval process associated with new development, and municipal concerns over the fiscal impacts of new development have combined to create a housing market which, over the last 15 to 20 years, predominantly builds large homes on large lots, or high-end and expensive rental housing. The Housing for Economic Growth bill provides several tools that can address these issues by:

- 1) Giving municipalities the option to voluntarily participate in the creation of additional housing units affordable to working class individuals and families.
- 2) Providing a design and development template for creating affordable mixed-income housing developments.
- 3) Giving municipalities the responsibility to control the location, appearance, type and amount of housing so that it meets the parameters of HB-7149 and fits into the specific context and development plan for each community.

(over)

- 4) Provides financial rewards for communities that establish housing incentive zones.
- 5) Provides cash payments when units are actually constructed.
- 6) Provides funds to compensate for the increased educational costs associated with these new developments.
- 7) Relies on the private market to produce housing, thereby creating jobs and generating fees and other revenues to municipalities and the State to help offset the costs of the incentive program.
- 8) Provides a reliable, long-term funding source for the financial incentives further encouraging municipalities to participate in the effort.

Creating more housing throughout Connecticut, in particular housing that is affordable to the many thousands of individual and households employed in the service industries in the public and private sector, should be a high priority for action. It is also important to increase this housing supply so the private sector will feel they can expand or locate their operations in Connecticut with the assurance that their workforce will find quality housing in quality communities.

CCAPA supports the adoption of HB-7149 as a voluntary, incentive based approach to create more affordable housing.