

To the members of the Vermont State Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources,

On behalf of the Westford Planning Commission, we ask you to support the Vermont Planners Association's requests related to H.823. Specifically, we ask you to bring back the requirement to review Town and Regional Plans under Criterion 9(L), listed as 9(L) (iii) in the House-passed version (on p.4 of the current revision under consideration), and to fix the reference under 9(L) (ii), also on p.4, which currently refers only to section 4302(1) and appears to be an inadvertent error, to refer to the relevant goals (5),(8),(9) and (10)."

As required by Vermont's Planning Law (Chapter 117), our local Plan contains a future land use map and descriptions of desired types and forms of development in different areas of the Town. Like local Planning Commissions across Vermont, the Westford Planning Commission has spent a great deal of time gathering input from local citizens to develop our local Plan. Given the broad, diverse landscape found throughout the State of Vermont, local plans remain an invaluable tool for determining appropriate development patterns. We feel that the efforts of local boards and citizens must be considered in the Act 250 process. The amendments to H.823 proposed by the Vermont Planners Association will ensure that specific land use policies in our local plan are reinforced by the District Commission. This will help to create a more predictable process for host communities, applicants, and neighboring property owners.

Again, we request that the Committee reinsert reference to local and regional plans under Criterion 9(L). We would be happy to discuss this issue in greater detail if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

The Westford Planning Commission, Westford, Vermont

Jeremy Berger -- Chair
Gordon Gebauer -- Vice Chair
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Melissa Manka -- Planning Coordinator