

September 11, 2020

Senator Michael Sirotkin, Chair
Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Committee
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

RE: S. 237

Dear Chair Sirotkin and Members of the Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment once again on this bill and the dire housing situation we face. The situation has only gotten worse since your extensive public hearing process held around the state in 2019. The crisis remains and the necessity to address the issue from many angles, in decisive ways, is appropriate and appreciated.

Your bill as passed by the full Senate, is consistent with the policies of the TRORC Regional Plan as they relate to the development of more housing, and especially affordable housing. While we all agree there are other impediments to building more housing than local plans and regulations, we must look at everything and make improvements where we can.

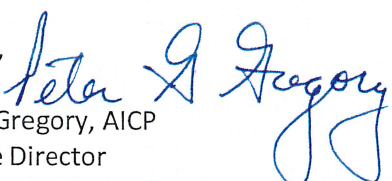
Some of the additional suggestions and refinements made in testimony in the House Committee have been helpful in strengthening the bill. Other suggestions appear to weaken the bill.

TRORC continues to support the bill as passed by the Senate. The following refinements may improve the bill:

1. Some communities have water and sewer areas far beyond the traditional settled areas and the geographic area may be too large. I would suggest that it be tied more closely to state designated areas and maybe one quarter to one half mile from those boundaries.
2. Revise is issue of conditional use review and approval to a simple "no bylaw shall require conditional use approval for units that are affordable as define by 24 VSA section 4303".
3. In 4414(7)(C) there is enabling language for incentives, BUT this is **only** in the context of an inclusionary zoning provision. I might suggest adding another sentence to this. "Such incentives may also be included for affordable housing in zoning and subdivision bylaws that do not have an inclusionary zoning provision."

Thank you for the opportunity to once again, support your efforts and offer additional thoughts. I look forward to continuing our discussion on ways to increase production and support affordability strategies in the coming years.

Sincerely,


Peter G. Gregory, AICP
Executive Director

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