



MEMO

TO: Members, House Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Committee

FROM: Karen Horn, Director, Public Policy & Advocacy

RE: S. 101 Encouraging Housing Choice and Opportunity

DATE: April 13, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on S. 101. We support the bill as it was passed by the Senate. The key difference from last year's effort is that S. 101 encourages patterns of development and action at the local level to encourage housing and walkable, bikeable, vibrant communities and does not impose penalties on those communities that fail to take certain actions.

The bill provides:

- Encouragement to municipalities to modernize their zoning bylaws and ordinances in ways that reduce barriers to the construction of housing;
- Increased Municipal Grant funding targeted to modernization of bylaws that will encourage housing and pedestrian friendly development patterns;
- Extension of the Downtown and Village Center tax credit program to neighborhood development areas and raising of the cap;
- Removal of the requirement for a person developing or redeveloping housing to procure two permits, one from the state and one from the town, and pay two fees in order to connect to a municipal wastewater treatment or water supply system.

According to the Department of Environmental Conservation website, there are 92 municipal wastewater treatment facilities that process more than 15 billion gallons of wastewater per year. In most towns the wastewater treatment facility is the most valuable infrastructure in the community. Facilities are run by professionals whose job it is to assure that the facilities meet all the requirements under operating permits issued by the Agency of Natural Resources. The need to secure two permits to connect to a municipal wastewater or water supply system is duplicative, time consuming, expensive and provides no additional value to the individual who has to secure those permits.

We urge you to support S. 101.