

I spoke to you last week as a representative of the South Burlington Land Trust. This submission is on my own behalf.

I am urging you to consider the ramifications of the Omnibus Housing bill on the climate crisis, which is **by far the greatest threat** facing our generation. As written, this bill will **worsen the climate crisis** in two ways. First, the material, construction, and maintenance of new housing will **increase** our use of fossil fuels and **increase our greenhouse gas emissions**. And second, because the bill directs housing onto open lands which contain natural resources (at least that is the case in South Burlington), it will destroy nature's ability to absorb and store carbon, and eliminate the essential ecological services nature provides us, such as clean air, pure water, healthy food, flood control, temperature regulation, and so much more. This is another of those "inconvenient truths."

Climate scientists tell us that conserving nature and its natural resources is essential if we want to preserve our ability to live comfortably on this planet. They tell us we need to do two things at the same time to address climate change: dramatically reduce our use of fossil fuels and stop the destruction of our natural environment. Tragically, the Omnibus Housing bill runs counter to both of these, and will make Vermont's climate goals unattainable.

**I fear that in your well-intentioned haste to react to a short-term and temporary housing problem, you will inadvertently sabotage our efforts to prepare for and mitigate the climate change disasters coming our way.**

The major flaw in this Housing bill is that it uses the existence of municipal water and sewer as the criteria for where housing should be built. This bill will encourage housing over natural resource lands in South Burlington because 17 years ago the city unthinkingly ran water and sewer lines into the rural areas of the city. In subsequent years, the city wisely zoned some of these lands adjacent to the municipal lines as Natural Resource Protection areas. This Housing bill will undo those protections and direct housing on them.

In light of the climate crisis and the criticality of preserving nature, building houses over natural resource lands should be **prohibited not encouraged**. More housing units can be added through renovations, refurbishments, and repurposing existing empty or under-utilized commercial and residential spaces.

We are losing open lands faster than ever in Vermont. Constructing more buildings will **add** more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere; and destroying nature prevents it from storing carbon, thus allowing even more greenhouse gases to escape.

Please don't pass a bill that will make the climate crisis worse. Satisfying a temporary housing problem should not put in peril the elements of our survival and doom our efforts to leave our children with a livable earth.

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