

February 16, 2023

Vermont Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and General Affairs
Vermont House Committee on General and Housing

Subject: Testimony for February 16th Public Hearing on Housing (also to be presented in person)

I've lived in South Burlington for 23 years, specifically in the Southeast Quadrant, and I'm happy to be here to express my support for the Omnibus Housing Bill.

My professional background is in infrastructure and economic development planning and consulting, and I've advised policy-makers and private businesses across the country and around the world on these topics. In my opinion, this bill is an essential piece of helping remove local barriers to meeting Vermont's need to grow its labor force and attract quality jobs by allowing the addition of much-needed homes.

From the perspective of employers, particularly in those "clean" and "green" industries Vermont wants to attract, retain, and grow, proximity to qualified employees is almost universally cited as a critical factor in deciding where to locate. In other words, if they can't find the workers, they'll go elsewhere. Therefore, facilitating the development of housing that all families can afford, with accessibility to a range of quality jobs, is essential to building a future for all Vermonters.

I think we also all agree that we want our kids and their families to have a viable economic future that doesn't require them to move out of state. However, according to an analysis by the Washington Post, Vermont loses 58 percent of our college graduates, which is the lowest rate of retention among all states. Certainly, increasing our state's stock of housing across all price points can only help improve this situation.

Finally, as I'm sure you know, employers desire and need predictable and stable business environments to thrive and provide jobs. This bill will make zoning and building requirements more consistent and predictable across the state, thus making home building less costly and promoting economic development.

In sum, by making it easier to build badly-needed homes, this bill will help overcome a critical challenge to Vermont's future economic vitality.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter E. Plumeau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "E".

Peter E. Plumeau
33 Knoll Circle
South Burlington, VT 05403