

4/19/2024

Dear members of the Vermont Senate,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about my concerns with the School Construction Aid bill before the Senate. I mention these concerns because they would possibly impact my school District, the Marlboro School District, and others, at the same time I recognize that answers to my questions may already be included in your Legislation in which case I apologize for taking up time.

- 1) Marlboro has been actively exploring moving our school to a completely different location, a much newer and better building in a much better place, for several years. We have employed an architectural firm, Banwell and Associates, to help us with these explorations. We have dedicated much time and resource to this effort and are greatly looking forward to some State construction support. Because our school is among the oldest ones in the State, in need of essentially everything imaginable, and is in a terrible location beside a busy highway, there is no doubt that making this move would both save money and provide a better educational setting. I want to make sure that any School Construction aid bills coming out would allow construction aid money to be used to move to better facilities as well as to improve existing ones.

- 2) There is mention in the Bill of a potential zoning prohibition for some towns and I want to clarify how this will be administered. Here is the reference:

H.871 (School construction bill)

Sec. 4. STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION WORKING GROUP; REPORT

- (1) The Working Group shall study and create a recommended plan for
(C) Eligibility criteria. The Working Group shall consider, at a minimum, the following state aid eligibility criteria:
(v) a prohibition on exclusionary zoning regulations that would preclude lesser resourced families from living in the applicable school district.

I do not know whether this prohibition would impact us or not- My request to you today is that there be a good description of what is meant by this section of the Bill so school districts will be able to either know that their own ordinances do not trigger this prohibition or to begin to work with other agencies within the town to change ordinances. I understand and agree with this stipulation but it should be noted that school boards have no direct authority over or say in what municipal Zoning Boards do.

Sincerely, Dan MacArthur Marlboro School Board Chair