

Good Morning Senators and Committee Staff:

I realize that you want to push through this S. 100 legislation by the end of the week, AND that this is a very big bill; AND still--after listening to testimony presented to your committee, it is clear that this bill is NOT ready for a vote.

I'd be willing to offer testimony that--so far, as I can tell--No One has yet presented in any comprehensive manner. I am not a lobbyist, and have no financial interests.

Part of my motivation comes from hearing Representative Bongart's testimony where he made many claims about "poor people," what we want, how we live, and what will be best, for "seniors"; also, Becca White, speaking for herself reflects ONE group of her peers' desires. I'd like to tell you about the young people I know, and what they say they want. Their interests have not yet been represented. I don't see on your witness list ANYONE who accurately reflects my decades of experience with affordable housing, REAL ZERO housing design, food security & sustainable regenerative agriculture, and a few other related issues that S. 100 fails to adequately address. (Thomas Weiss' proposal that infill development address sunlight and garden space is the only reference to gardens, which can support food security in economic downturns--a lesson we should have learned from the pandemic)

Pushing through a bad bill is not better than waiting for a better bill after Town Meeting Day.

If you disagree with that concept, then please, remove every section in S. 100 that repeals environmental regulations (Act 250, State permitting of wastewater systems) and repeals local democratic planning and governance in our own communities: both Act 250 and local zoning; and take into full consideration testimony offered by Jon Groveman & Thomas Weiss.

Fully funding OR INCREASING the capacity of the VHCB--at the very least--is one way to accelerate the development of perpetually affordable housing that keeps current zoning and permitting protocols in place until there is time to more carefully consider the implications of the proposed bill S. 100 (or the housing only for the wealthy bill, that will increase our carbon footprint by multiples).

Finally, I want to point out that a focus on rural clustered development with shared infrastructure (water/wastewater, agricultural land, social supports like potential for childcare, senior care, extra hands during weeding/ harvesting, etc) can give in-town communities time to repair failing wastewater systems while still increasing housing units.* Adding additional housing in towns with repeated wastewater overflows into our waterways is foolish and unconscionable.

Regulations on designs that include the goals of REAL ZERO energy use, and other 21st century concepts of whole systems management of rural landscapes that also sequester carbons while providing affordable housing and social resilience by integrating socio-ecological concepts with real world practical implementation that protects the invaluable intact ecological health has the potential to address the need for increasing affordable housing while protecting ecological integrity required for long-term resilience in face of the impacts of global climate change.

I do not understand how your committee--that just passed out S. 5 supposedly to decrease

Vermont's carbon emissions--can pass a housing bill that will increase thermal carbon emissions by multiples unless there are clear **design regulations**.... ALL new homes must have their designs regulated to manage Vermont's carbon emissions. (53(c) 1 & 2 --legislative council is currently identifying. Eliminate it!)

I appreciated hearing Senator Bray refer to Bristol Cohousing--which is likely an example that reflects some of the concepts in my paragraph above. I'm not familiar with that project, but the several other Vermont cohousing projects with which I am familiar are **not affordable** without substantial subsidy. More comprehensive testimony on this and related matters need to be reviewed before this bill is ready for a vote.

Many thanks for your considerations,

Renée

* Myself and many Vermonters have never agreed with the concept of "Smart Growth" as the be all Climate Change solution. Like the rhetoric behind S. 5 and S. 100, I experience these as typical of "communications rhetoric": That is, to identify what is desired even though the proposal will do the opposite. We just can't pay for expensive PR firms/ communications experts to promote our opposition.

PS- As one friend recently pointed out: The list of people testifying to the Natural Resources committee seems heavily weighted towards developers and realtors and other development professionals. How many of these people (organizations/ associations) were already heard from in the economic development committee? Why aren't there more people focused on protecting natural resources from housing development? (Are Thomas and Jon Groveman the only two?)

And why are there no innovators who are experienced with whole systems design towards ecological resilience? Many of "the young people" that we want to keep in Vermont are immersed in these practical and necessary innovations. Ask them.
We cannot solve 21st century problems with 20th (or 19th) century thinking.

Renée Carpenter