

I am a resident of South Burlington, and am writing to oppose the Bill's exclusive focus on public water and sewer to determine where further development will occur.

The Bill will penalize municipalities like SB that have taken responsible steps to invest in public water and sewer services for more residents—something that in itself has significant environmental benefits. S. 100 as written will override the steps those same municipalities have taken to identify and protect areas of significant ecological concern by mandating that development be allowed wherever there is public water and sewers, despite codified ecological concerns.

Such a one-size-fits-all approach is, as always, ham-handed and mistaken. It is an example of how legislation gets a bad name for overreach and tone-deafness.

A simple amendment will resolve the problem in most cases. Adding the clause “, subject to pre-existing municipal environmental ordinances or regulations,” wherever appropriate will avoid penalizing municipalities like SB that have invested substantial effort to identify and protect sensitive ecological zones. It could even encourage other municipalities to do so.

Such an amendment can be added by the NRE Committee to better protect the environment we all share while still steering development toward areas where necessary support infrastructure is in place. I urge the Committee to take this step in furtherance of its mandate.

Therese Kurtze