

S-325 House Environment Committee Testimony

Kirsten Sultan & Alex Weinhagen (Members, Land Use Review Board):

Presentation reviewing the administrative transfer of NR Board responsibilities to the reconstituted LURB.

Council Member Council Member counsel also testified on the question of the Board's authority to determine appropriate criteria for the transition period under the Act 250 Regulations.

Legislation should specify the authorities' waiver rights in order to avoid building up of backlogs.

Samantha Sheehan (Vermont League of Cities and Towns):

Discussed issues of the "Road Rule" with the Department of Agriculture. Also spoke with the local municipal selectboards where the "Road Rule" is causing additional problems.

There is growing support in a number of towns for removing local approval requirements from major rural developments. Rather than seeking a deferral of any planned changes, some town boards are speaking out in favour of a complete repeal of any approval requirements for such projects.

Miro Weinberger (Executive Chairperson, Let's Build Homes):

Vermont's Demographic Crisis and Housing Production Shortage Exposed In Numbers.

Support development exemptions in all municipal service areas. Support expansion of Act 250 exemptions to all areas served by municipal water and sewer.

Called for the repeal of the "Road Rule" and the introduction of "ROOT Zones"(Residential Opportunity Overlay for Towns) so that there could be predictable "by-right" development throughout the "ROOT Zones".

Vermont has had wind laws on the books for some time but developments in neighboring towns are bringing the issue to the forefront again.

We should support fully inclusive mixed use development (residential + commercial) in current Act 250 exemption areas.

The Committee advised against any amendments which would weaken environmental safeguards for natural resources such as wetlands, river corridors and floodplains.

Sam Lincoln (Lincoln Farm):

Testified that the "Road Rule" creates an undue burden on rural landowners and forestry operations.

Regulations on rural driveway improvements should not be the same as those for major subdivisions, because overly strict regulations have the potential to detract from the working lands economy.