

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7034

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE REQUIREMENT OF A DONATION OF LAND AS A

Title: CONDITION OF SUBDIVISION APPROVAL.

Vote Date: 3/6/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/27/2025

File No.: 244

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Housing Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would prohibit municipalities from requiring a donation of land from an applicant for subdivision of land as a condition of subdivision approval. Currently, subdividing begets the donation of land to the municipality, but the size of these parcels varies, resulting in some sporadic and inaccessible pieces of new municipal property. The bill seeks to improve the development and planning process by removing this requirement.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Jim Perras, CEO, The Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut:](#) Jim Perras testified in support of this legislation on behalf of The Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut (HBA). Perras argued mandatory land donations add significant secondary costs to housing construction. The National Association of Home Builders state that regulatory costs make up nearly 25% of a new home's price, and this bill helps to reduce those costs. Perras did emphasize that land donations should remain an optional tool for towns and developers.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns:](#) Betsy Gara provided opposition to this legislation on behalf of The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), arguing that, "this is a valuable tool in obtaining certain land parcels needed for parks, playgrounds, greenways, open space, and other beneficial municipal purposes." Gara warned that eliminating these requirements would prevent towns from reclaiming land for public use.

[Sam Gold, Executive Director, The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments:](#) Sam Gold testified in opposition on behalf The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG). Gold emphasized, "municipalities regularly require donation of open space and rights of way as a condition of subdivision approvals" for environmental, transportation, and development reasons. Gold argued that removing this requirement would weaken municipalities' ability to preserve natural lands and maintain public safety, however, he conceded that at times this donated land is undevelopable.

[John Guskowski, Government Relations Co-Chair, The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association:](#) John Guskowski testified in opposition to this legislation on behalf of The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association (CCAPA). Guskowski warned it would, "eliminate a municipality's flexibility when it comes to requiring open space transferred to the municipality, a fee in lieu of on-site open space, or a combination thereof." Guskowski argued this change would hinder communities' ability to manage growth and recreational needs, and some may adjust their zoning to offset these changes.

[Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director, The Connecticut Land Conservation Council:](#) Amy Blaymore Paterson testified in opposition to this legislation on behalf of The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC). Paterson argued it, "would strip municipalities of a longstanding planning tool for preserving open space and enhancing community resources." Paterson emphasized that eliminating the land donation requirement prevents them from planning for open spaces and other environmental goals. CLCC urged strengthening, not weakening, local planning authority.

[Alan Siniscalchi, President, The Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions:](#) Alan Siniscalchi testified in opposition to this legislation on behalf of The Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inlands Wetlands Commissions (CACIWC). Siniscalchi emphasized, "many municipalities lack funds for the preservation of important open space habitats identified by conservation commissions." Siniscalchi argued that eliminating land donation requirements or fees "would reduce opportunities to preserve open space habitats" and hinder efforts to expand parks that provide recreational benefits.

[Francis Pickering, Executive Director, Western Connecticut Council of Governments:](#) Francis Pickering testified in opposition to this legislation on behalf of The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG). Pickering stated this bill would "constitute a significant setback to Connecticut's environmental stewardship, public health, and economic prosperity", and argued that the donation is not an unreasonable local demand. Pickering asserted that this bill is counterproductive to Connecticut's overall environmental goals, including its aim for 21% of land to be open space.

[Maria Weingarten, Founder, CT 169 Strong](#): Maria Weingarten testified in opposition of this legislation stating the bill would undermine, "the state's goal of requiring 21% of land to be preserved as conservation land." Weingarten emphasized Connecticut's high population and land density and warned that removing local oversight weakens environmental protections. Additionally, Weingarten stressed "local land use commissions are the true protectors of the environment" and eliminating their discretion could harm public water supplies and watershed areas. Weingarten urged legislators to reject the bill and instead foster a "more collaborative process" that includes local experts.

[Rob Wilkens](#): Rob Wilkens testified in opposition to this bill and emphasized that the current appropriations for land conservation are already minimal and that "repealing this funding is contrary to the State of CT's goals to preserve open space."

[Lisa Bernier](#): Lisa Bernier testified in opposition of this bill stating, "To build 500 tiny houses in CT and to expect the towns to allow building developments with no regard to zoning in each town is wrong!" Bernier expressed concern over high taxes and hidden political agendas, asserting, "You say you care about all residents of CT, but I don't think you do!"

[Dana Barrow, First Selectman, Town of Scotland](#): First Selectman Barrow stated that he opposed this bill.

**Reported by: Arianna Tsikitas, Clerk
Chris Peritore, Assistant Clerk**

Date: 3/20/2025