

# Planning and Development Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** HB-5508 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND HISTORIC  
**Title:** PRESERVATION.

**Vote Date:** 3/13/2026

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/11/2026

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Planning and Development Committee

### CO-SPONSORS:

Rep. Kadeem Roberts, 137th Dist.  
Rep. John Santanella, 58th Dist.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill makes several changes to laws governing historic districts and preservation. It requires Historic District Commission hearings to be broadcast and recorded online, shifts appeals from Superior Court to local zoning boards of appeals, and exempts state and municipal properties from full Historic District Commission oversight by making reviews advisory only. It also expands historic rehabilitation tax credits to include 2–4 unit income-producing residential properties, allows credits of up to 25–30% of eligible costs with transferability limits, and sets annual program caps. Additionally, the bill requires coordination between state entities on Capitol preservation and expands environmental protections to include properties deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

This bill is intended to increase transparency, streamline administrative processes, provide greater flexibility for state and municipal projects, and expand financial incentives to support the rehabilitation of historic properties and the preservation of housing stock.

### SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

This substitute removes a requirement from Sec. 1 that historic district commissions retain recordings of hearings, in Sec. 3 exempts state agencies from certain requirements relating to historic districts, and removes Sec. 6.

## RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

### Department of Economic and Community Development, Commissioner Daniel

O’Keefe: Opposes portions of this bill, raising concerns that shifting appeals from Superior Court to local zoning boards could weaken historic protections due to limited expertise and potential conflicts of interest. Also warns that proposed tax credit limits, including a \$100,000 cap and \$5 million set-aside, and expanded preservation criteria could create uncertainty, complicate enforcement, and hinder development and preservation efforts.

### Department of Administrative Services, Commissioner Michelle Gilman:

Opposes Section 3 of this bill, citing concerns that it creates a duplicative and potentially burdensome review process for state projects in historic districts. Notes that existing procedures under CEPA already evaluate historic impacts, and argues the additional municipal review could introduce delays and inefficiencies without improving preservation outcomes.

## NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

### Connecticut House of Representatives, Majority Leader, Jason Rojas:

Supports Sections 4 and 5 of this bill, stating they expand historic tax credits to 2–4 unit properties to support preservation of small multifamily housing, particularly in urban areas, and improve coordination between state entities to maintain and preserve the State Capitol and surrounding historic resources.

### City of Hartford, Mayor, Arunan Arulampalam:

Supports this bill, emphasizing that expanding historic rehabilitation tax credits will help preserve aging housing stock, maintain naturally occurring affordable housing, and encourage reinvestment in older multifamily properties. He notes that a large share of Hartford’s housing was built before 1950 and requires significant upgrades, and argues that these incentives can help close financing gaps, stabilize neighborhoods, and support housing supply.

Anonymous 1015: Supports this bill, particularly moving appeals to ZBA, but raises concerns that allowing new evidence could weaken Historic District Commission decisions.

Marjorie Carson: Supports this bill, stating it maintains historic preservation while giving municipalities more flexibility to complete public projects, and citing delays by Historic District Commissions that have hindered improvements to town properties.

Wolverine Property LLC, CEO, Aaron Gill: Supports this bill, stating that expanding historic tax credits to smaller residential properties will help finance renovations, restore blighted buildings, and increase affordable housing while supporting neighborhood revitalization and economic development.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Senior Executive Director, Jim Horan: Supports this bill, emphasizing that expanding historic tax credits to 1–4 unit properties, including a proposed 30% credit, will help preserve affordable housing, fund rehabilitation of aging properties, and support economic development in communities across Connecticut facing housing shortages.

Hartford Land Bank, Executive Director, Marcus Ordonez: Supports this bill, stating it will help fund rehabilitation of vacant and distressed historic properties, support developers working on 2–4 unit housing, and expand affordable housing, while recommending removal of the \$100,000 tax credit cap.

Town of Wethersfield, Town Manager, Frederick Presley: Supports this bill, stating it would give municipalities more flexibility on public projects while still allowing Historic District Commission input, and reduce delays on needed improvements.

Carey Shea: Supports this bill, emphasizing that expanding historic tax credits to small 1–4 unit properties, including a proposed 30% credit, will help fund rehabilitation, preserve affordable housing, and promote investment in historic neighborhoods.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

Greg Adams: Opposes this bill, arguing it weakens Historic District Commissions. Undermines local control and could harm historic preservation efforts.

Anonymous 1017, Historic District Resident: Opposes this bill, arguing it undermines local oversight, weakens preservation protections, and risks inappropriate development and loss of historic character.

Anonymous 1019: Opposes this bill, arguing it weakens Historic District Commissions and allows towns to bypass preservation standards, potentially harming historic character and local oversight.

Anonymous 999: Opposes this bill

Connecticut Preservation Action, President, Mary A. Falvey: Opposes this bill, specifically Sections 3 and 6 while supporting Section 4. Raises concerns that exempting state and municipal properties from local historic oversight would undermine preservation efforts and public trust, and argues Section 6 may violate due process. Supports expanding the historic rehabilitation tax credit to help maintain affordable housing and preserve historic properties.

Cynthia Clancy: Opposes this bill, arguing it exempts municipalities from historic district oversight and weakens due process protections

Hartford Preservation Alliance, Executive Director, Mary A. Falvey: Opposes this bill, specifically section 3, arguing that exempting municipalities from Historic District Commission oversight undermines preservation efforts, reduces community input, and risks damage to historic sites.

Connecticut Council of Small Towns, Executive Director, Betsy Gara: Opposes this bill, specifically Section 1 due to concerns about unfunded mandates and increased

municipal costs, while supporting Section 3 for providing greater flexibility in managing municipal properties within historic districts.

Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments, Executive Director, Samuel S. Gold: Opposes this bill, raising concerns with Section 1, stating that requiring permanent storage of public hearing recordings would increase costs, create administrative burdens, and set a precedent for other boards.

CT Chapter of the American Planning Association, Government Relations Officer, John Guszowski: Opposes this bill, citing concerns about unfunded mandates for broadcasting meetings and exemptions for state and municipal properties, while noting support for certain provisions such as shifting appeals to ZBA.

Pam Harrison: Opposes this bill.

New London Landmarks, Executive Director, Violet Johnson: Opposes Section 3 of this bill, arguing it creates a double standard by exempting state and municipal properties from historic preservation rules and could harm preservation efforts, public trust, and historic community assets.

Stephen Kelly: Opposes this bill, emphasizing the importance of local Historic District Commissions and arguing that preservation decisions should remain with residents who have a direct stake in the community.

Andrew Melillo: Opposes this bill, stating it would weaken Historic District Commissions by limiting in-person meetings and shifting appeals from Superior Court to local zoning boards.

Maryanne Pappas: Opposes this bill

Brian Rathbun: Opposes this bill, citing concerns about loss of local control and arguing that zoning and planning decisions should be made by local communities rather than the state.

Gisele Reyngoudt: Opposes this bill.

Theresa Sesko: Opposes this bill, stating it would allow municipalities to override local Historic District Commissions, risking damage to historic properties and reducing local control over preservation decisions.

Town of Old Lyme, First Selectwoman, Martha Shoemaker: Opposes this bill, specifically the requirement to permanently store public hearing recordings, citing significant costs, administrative burden, and inconsistency with existing FOI retention requirements.

Anonymous 1018: Opposes this bill, citing concerns that it shifts authority, weakens judicial review, exempts government entities from historic district rules, and expands tax credits while potentially limiting citizens' ability to challenge decisions.

Anonymous 1027: Opposes this bill.

Judy Tacey: Opposes this bill.

Kristine Lisella: Opposes this bill.

Cynthia Steckler: Opposes this bill.

CT Preservation Action, President, Mary Falvey:

Opposes portions of this bill, specifically Sections 3 and 6, arguing they weaken historic preservation standards and due process, while supporting Section 4 for expanding tax credits to help maintain affordable housing and rehabilitate historic properties.

Lena Gjonaj: Opposes this bill.

Old Lyme Historic District Commission, Martha Hansen: Opposes this bill, specifically the requirement to permanently store public hearing recordings, citing costs, technological burdens, and the volume of hearings as unnecessary for municipalities.

Victoria Kal: Opposes this bill, stating it would create broad exemptions that weaken historic district protections, reduce local oversight, and risk harm to community character, tourism, and property values.

Westport Historic District Commission, Chairman Benjamin Levites: , opposing exemptions for state and municipal properties while noting support for certain tax credit provisions.

Anja Markwordt Skehan: Opposes this bill.

John E. Noyes: Opposes this bill, raising concerns that Section 3 is overly broad and may limit Historic District Commission authority, and suggesting revisions to preserve oversight, clarify advisory roles, and maintain certain protections.

Wethersfield Historic District Commission, Commissioner, Mark Raymond:

Opposes this bill, stating it would create unequal standards by exempting municipal properties and weaken historic district protections.

Preservation Connecticut, Deputy Director, Christopher Wigren: Opposes this bill overall, citing concerns that several sections weaken historic preservation, local oversight, and due process, while noting support for provisions such as expanding tax credits and improving coordination on state historic assets.

**Reported by: Michael Hamann**

**Date: [Type Date]**