



February 13, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

HB 5002 AAC HOUSING AND THE NEEDS OF HOMELESS PERSONS

SB 12 AAC CONNECTICUT'S HOUSING NEEDS

To: Honorable Co-Chairs Sen. Marx and Rep. Felipe, and Distinguished Members of the Housing Committee

From: Lilliana Sarju, Policy & Outreach Coordinator, CT League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of **House Bill 5002 and Senate Bill 12** which could help lower housing costs, increase housing options and better support homeless persons.

Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is a fundamental necessity and a key determinant of health, economic opportunity, and overall well-being. However, Connecticut continues to struggle with rising housing costs and a severe shortage of affordable housing options, leaving too many individuals and families vulnerable to homelessness or housing instability.

CTLCV firmly believes that addressing our housing crisis is an urgent priority that can greatly improve the quality of life for many residents. As housing justice and environmental justice are intersected. **CTLCV supports HB 5002 and SB 12 if it is implemented with a clear commitment to protecting our environment through strict adherence to EPA guidelines and a commitment to sustainability.** Affordable housing development must not come at the expense of our natural resources or public health.

Connecticut has long been a leader in environmental stewardship, and any new housing projects must adhere strictly to EPA guidelines and state environmental standards. We must build in a manner that protects our air, water, and natural habitats, ensuring that every project incorporates energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy sources, and green building materials. **By doing so, we lower the carbon footprint of new housing and set a high standard for sustainable development.**

With increasing extreme weather events happening more often our residences

are increasingly vulnerable to pollution, flooding, and other natural hazards. In 2023, flooding in Hartford caused \$9 million in damages to residents and property owners. With extreme weather events intensifying due to climate change, it is imperative that we build housing that is not only affordable but also resilient. We must think carefully about location when deciding where and how to develop, ensuring that new projects can withstand the impacts of natural disasters while protecting the well-being of lower-income and middle-class residents—the very groups most affected when disaster strikes.

To address these challenges, we need to promote resilient developments such as transit-oriented communities (TOCs). TOCs have the advantage of increasing the supply of multi-family homes, facilitating the adaptive reuse of older buildings, and emphasizing smaller, energy-efficient housing units. These strategies generate more efficient energy use and resource management, while also increasing the diversity of available housing.

Incorporating sustainable practices—from efficient stormwater management and effective waste reduction to transit-oriented and infill development—ensures that our efforts to address the housing crisis do not come at the expense of our environment. Instead, they create long-lasting, resilient communities that are better prepared for future challenges, including those posed by climate change.

CTLCV respectfully urges the Assembly to pass SB12 and HB 5002, with the clear mandate that all affordable housing developments must fully comply with EPA and state environmental guidelines and integrate sustainable building practices. By doing so, Connecticut can expand housing opportunities while safeguarding the environment for current and future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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