



TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT OF HB 5390**
AAC TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES
March 4, 2024

To: Co-Chairs Rep. Kavros DeGraw and Sen. Rahman, Vice Chairs Sen. Needleman and Rep. Chafee, Ranking Members Sen. Fazio and Rep. Zullo, and Distinguished Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB 5390 to advance transit-oriented communities and simultaneously provide community resiliency in our state.**

CTLCV understands the need for affordable housing and believes that the housing and environmental community can and must work together to ensure that affordable housing meets environmental justice standards. Given the challenges of climate change and the impacts on our natural resources, now is the time to advance smart growth principles, such as transit-oriented communities. HB 5390 does just that. **It provides another zoning tool for land use planners, creating transit-oriented development and incorporates environmental standards, including inland wetlands and watercourse protection into the program.**

Inland wetlands provide critical services and are nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation. They not only sequester carbon but provide flood storage, drought resilience and improve water quality. They are important for stormwater management particularly in areas of increased housing density. HB 5390 ensures that the local inland wetlands and watercourses agencies are consulted during the design of transit-oriented development and that IWWA may hold public hearings as necessary. This important provision makes certain that applications address stormwater management and urban street flooding resulting in better development patterns that keep affordable housing residents and local communities safe.

HB 5390 also exempts certain land uses from inclusion in the transit-oriented zone. Exemptions include FEMA hazard areas, public parks, and drinking water supply areas and are in keeping with smart-growth principles. Finally, this bill creates a state interagency council on housing housed in OPM under the direction of State Responsible Growth Coordinator. It also provides for funding incentives for development in transit-oriented zones further advancing responsible, sustainable growth in Connecticut.

Thank you for considering these comments as the Planning and Development Committee works to provide sustainable and resilient affordable housing.

CTLCV urges the committee to **vote yes in support of HB 5390** to further advance transit-oriented communities.