PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES

Partnership for Strong Communities promotes equitable change in Connecticut housing policy by coordinating advocacy, advancing research, and uniting diverse partners

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA
PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES
MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025

Senator Anwar, Representative McCarthy Vahey, Senator Somers, Representative Klarides-Ditria, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. I am Alysha Gardner, Senior Policy Analyst with the Partnership for Strong Communities.

We respectfully request that the committee support **HB 7247 – AN ACT CONCERNING SEWAGE DISPOSAL REQUIREMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT.**

As a statewide nonprofit research, policy and advocacy organization, we are dedicated to ensuring everyone in Connecticut has a safe, stable home that is affordable to them in an equitable community of their choice. We have long recognized the abundant body of research on the intersection of housing and health outcomes, particularly for lower-income households. Likewise, we also support policies that protect Connecticut's environment and believe that all Connecticut residents, particularly members of historically marginalized communities, should have access to clean air, water, and open space.

The most recent reports on housing affordability in Connecticut show that the current housing situation is untenable for a growing share of Connecticut families:

- 3 in every 4 extremely low-income CT households (with incomes at or below 30% of the Area Median Income) spend more than 50% of their income on housing costs;
- 1 in every 3 low-income CT households (with incomes between 30-50% AMI) spend more than 50% of their income on housing costs.
- Together, these groups represent **over 150,000 CT families spending over half of their income on housing.**

Given the ongoing and severe housing crisis in Connecticut, we believe it is incumbent upon state leaders to appropriately weigh the benefits of additional regulation with the costs they impose on housing construction and affordability. This bill takes a proactive and collaborative approach to solving ongoing challenges with sewage disposal, particularly nitrogen discharge, by creating a working group made up of representatives from the Departments of Public Health, Energy and Environmental Protection, and Housing, as well as subject matter experts, to examine prospective solutions by their impact on three important dimensions: housing development, public health, and the environment.

We support all state efforts to include environmental and public health leaders in discussions on how to work towards safely housing all Connecticut residents, and we urge committee members to support this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

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