

February 27, 2023

Esteemed Chairs Luxenberg and Moore,
Members of the Housing Committee:

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) appreciates the opportunity to comment on Raised Bill 6777, *An Act Concerning Property Tax Abatements for Certain Senior-Owned Deed-Restricted Properties*.

Bill 6777 would support housing affordability in municipalities where, per CGS §8-30g, fewer than 10% of housing units are deemed affordable, in three ways:

1. Reducing the housing cost burden by abating property taxes for senior homeowners of below average to average income,
2. Expanding the supply of affordable housing by requiring those homeowners to place a long-term, binding affordable housing deed restriction on their homes, and
3. Providing revenue for a local housing trust fund to create and preserve affordable housing, in the form of payments from owners on revocation of the restriction. (The penalty for revoking the restriction would be the greater of the taxes abated under this program or 50% of the difference in the appraised value of the property with and without the restriction.)

Bill 6777 would not only create more affordable housing. It would also make existing housing more affordable – something that current housing law and programs may not adequately address yet is critical to a comprehensive affordable housing strategy. Current law and programs arguably favor:

1. New homebuyers and renters; current affordable housing law and programs provide fewer if any options for existing homeowners with housing cost burdens.
2. Expanding affordability through new construction, even though new homes generally cost more than existing homes.

Bill 6777 could productively complement existing law and programs, and WestCOG looks forward to the further elaboration of these concepts.

Thank you for your consideration.



Francis R. Pickering
Executive Director