

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill No. 5507 Section 3
Planning and Development Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director
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Co-Chairs Rahman and Kavros DeGraw, Ranking Members Gordon and Haines, Vice-Chairs Needleman and Chafee, and members of the Planning and Development Committee:

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) is the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its ~117 land trusts. CLCC is a 501(c)(3) organization operating statewide. Our mission is to elevate and strengthen land conservation in Connecticut.

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony on behalf of CLCC regarding HB 5507, An Act Concerning Accessory Dwelling Units. CLCC's testimony is limited to Section 3 of the bill, which we strongly oppose.

As proposed, Section 3 invalidates any restrictive covenant on land that is contrary to the land's use under residential zoning regulations. If this provision is intended to address only certain residential land use restrictions, the language is not drafted that narrowly. As written, and without a clear definition of what constitutes an "arbitrary restriction," Section 3 could be interpreted broadly to invalidate a wide range of lawful restrictions on land.

This broad language raises significant concern that the provision could unintentionally affect conservation restrictions, including conservation easements defined and protected under Connecticut General Statutes §47-42a. Conservation easements are a critical and long-standing tool used by land trusts, municipalities, and the state to permanently protect natural resources, farmland, forests, and open space for the benefit of the public. Invalidating or undermining these legally binding restrictions—even unintentionally—could have serious consequences for conserved lands across the state.

We urge you to oppose Section 3 of the bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our comments and for all you do. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

