



February 8, 2022

Hon. Amy Sheldon, Chair
House Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife Committee
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Chairperson Sheldon:

Lack of housing is a crisis that virtually everyone recognizes in Vermont. It includes people looking to move from rentals to ownership; our children who would like to return to Vermont; those who would move to Vermont for the first time to work and raise families; our parents who hope to downsize from the home in which they raised their families; and those seeking to transition from homelessness to permanent housing. Few can find suitable housing in a price range that fits their needs. There is a severe statewide housing shortage at all levels of income and need – for renters and potential homeowners.

Every legislator came into this biennium understanding the crisis and committing to take action to encourage the development of housing in Vermont. Talking on VPR on January 4, Speaker Jill Krowinski said, “What I’m hearing from people across this state are really the needs around access to broadband, access to affordable, high quality childcare, and housing.” The 246 member cities and towns of VLCT agree. We support funding and reforming regulatory tools to enable the construction and rehabilitation of the “missing middle” and affordable housing.

For the past four weeks, your committee has been in possession of H.511, a bill of narrow scope that would address the disconnect between Act 250 jurisdiction in designated centers and the state’s goal of encouraging housing in compact settlement areas. It would provide relief now for developers seeking to construct or rehabilitate housing now – which is when relief is needed.

We strongly urge you to take up H.511 soon and remove duplicative regulatory impediments to the construction of housing in designated downtowns, neighborhood development areas, new town centers, and village and growth centers. We welcome your commitment to this issue and the opportunity to meet with the committee in support of facilitating the development of housing to meet Vermonters’ needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen B. Horn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Horn, Director
Public Policy and Advocacy