

# CONNECTICUT FEDERATION OF PLANNING & ZONING AGENCIES

STEVEN E. BYRNE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



BUILDING #2  
790 FARMINGTON AVENUE  
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032  
TELEPHONE (860) 677-7355  
FAX (860) 677-5262

Steven E. Byrne, Executive Director  
Connecticut Federation of Planning & Zoning Agencies

*PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE*

March 15, 2021

Good Morning, my name is Steven E. Byrne. I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Federation of Planning & Zoning Agencies and I am submitting testimony regarding **S.B. 1026** “An Act Concerning Training for Certain Planning and Zoning Officials”.

## **S.B. 1026 “An Act Concerning Training for Certain Planning and Zoning Officials”**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and submit testimony on proposed S.B. 1026 “An Act Concerning Training for Certain Planning and Zoning Officials”. The Connecticut Federation of Planning & Zoning Officials is **opposed** to this bill and believes it is a solution in search of a problem. In order to explain my statement, I would like to offer a brief statement about the Federation and its long history of providing training and information to planning and zoning officials.

The Connecticut Federation of Planning & Zoning Agencies was created out of a need and an idea. In 1948, a group of forward-looking individuals recognized a need to collect the varied planning and zoning experiences of Connecticut municipalities. They came up with the idea of forming an organization that would serve as the focal point for collecting and disseminating information to member agencies. Seventy-three years later, the Federation continues in this role. Our membership consists of planning commissions, zoning commissions, planning and zoning commissions and zoning boards of appeal located in 102 cities and towns throughout our state. Members of the Federation receive a quarterly newsletter which informs them of recent court decisions and legislation which impact them as planning and zoning officials. In addition, books and pamphlets on land use are available to them as well as training sessions.

I make the statement that this proposed bill is a solution in search of a problem based upon my considerable experience working with municipal land use agencies. Over the last 30 years, in addition to being a practicing attorney with a focus on land use law, I have been personally involved in the preparation of the Federation’s books and pamphlets as well as its education and

training activities. For many of my training sessions, I have invited officials from the Connecticut Siting Council, the Freedom of Information Commission, the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection and the U.S. Department of Justice to inform our members of the effect of various state and federal laws and regulations have on their role as planning and zoning officials. I have similarly invited members of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, the Connecticut Lodging Association and other such groups in a similar capacity. In short, training is already widespread.

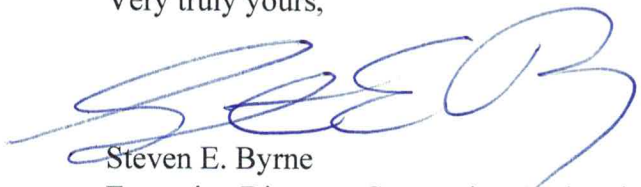
The Federation also opposes this bill because I believe it is based upon a false premise – that municipal land use agencies are composed of individuals who are ignorant of the law and their appropriate role as planning and zoning officials. This false premise is based upon the tainted opinions of developers and their attorneys when applications they have submitted are denied. The truth is that most if not all planning and zoning officials are long serving members of their agency and have become well informed of their duties. This has been accomplished in part through working with their attorney, planner and other professional consultants on applications that appear before their agency. This bill ignores this reality.

Lastly, the Federation opposes this bill because it effectively excludes many individuals and organizations from providing ‘certified’ training who presently do just that. For example, training provided by municipal staff and attorneys would not be counted towards the required hours as they are not a professional land use association or named in the bill. Nor would training provided by state agencies, such as the Freedom of Information Commission. This obvious omission of competent training resources from this bill causes the Federation to question the bills true intent.

The State of Connecticut would better serve its citizens by providing funding to its municipalities so that they could afford to include in their budgets the funds to have adequate staffing for their land use commissions and also to pay for professional consultants, including attorneys that specialize in land use law, to assist them in their duties.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Federation of Planning & Zoning Agencies. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Very truly yours,



Steven E. Byrne  
Executive Director, Connecticut Federation  
of Planning & Zoning Agencies  
[cfpza@live.com](mailto:cfpza@live.com)  
860-677-7355