



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

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Soon to be: Home Builders & Remodelers Association of CT, Inc.

*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

2012 State Legislative Session Wrap-Up

June 15, 2012

If it's ABOUT JOBS, then it HAS TO BE ABOUT HOME BUILDING!
(see Home Building's Economic Impact in Connecticut)

The 2012 state legislative session was officially convened on February 8 and adjourned at midnight on May 9. While "in session" for just these few months, state legislators work on legislation practically the entire year. So, it is critically important that the HBRA of CT and its members engage legislators year-round to best impact how they vote on our issues.

The state legislature took on many controversial issues that chewed up a lot of time, including education reform, repealing the death penalty, Sunday alcohol sales, unionizing day care workers and personal care assistants, legalizing medical marijuana, authorizing project labor agreements for larger public works projects, racial profiling by police, same-day voter registration, and state budget adjustments – all of which passed. It also heavily debated issues that did not pass or were vetoed, such as hiking the minimum wage, authorizing the use of red light cameras, campaign finance reform (passed but vetoed), and several environmental and food labeling issues. It was difficult to break through the "noise" of many advocates and the media searching for stories on these issues.

While the HBRA of CT had unfortunate losses on three bills (see HB 5035, SB 16 and SB 343), in the end we won just about every other priority, continuing the progress of regulatory reform and permit streamlining we've made over the past several years. The following is a summary of the major bills the HBRA of CT worked on or tracked.

Bills that passed and were signed by the Governor:
(HB = House Bill; SB = Senate Bill; PA = Public Act)

- ◆ **HB 5320**, PA 12-182, Fixes confusing language in PA 11-79 that deals with performance bonds developers provide to municipalities for site improvements. It also adds a new prohibition against the forced creation of homeowners associations to pay for the maintenance of public site improvements, and repeals the authority of municipalities to prohibit a building permit on site plans or subdivisions so that developers can fully utilize the ability to "build down" the amount of the bond or other financial guarantee they need to provide. (HBRA supported; effective June 15, 2012)
- ◆ **HB 5344**, PA 12-172, Streamlines the lengthy and expensive DEEP stormwater and other wastewater general permit process by allowing Qualified Professionals to certify compliance with applicable stormwater control requirements. DEEP must accept the certifications, although it can audit up to 10% of them. (HBRA supported; effective June 15, 2012)
- ◆ **SB 345**, PA 12-151, Simply extends inland wetland permit expiration dates to match associated site plan and subdivision expiration dates. It also includes reasonable language to codify the practice of restricting time-of-year work in or near wetlands. (HBRA supported; effective Oct. 1, 2012)
- ◆ **HB 5394**, PA 12-184, A response to the Stamford fire death tragedy, mandates temporary, battery operated smoke and CO detectors be installed in the vicinity of internal home improvement work during the performance of such work. It also requires a public education campaign be conducted by the Dept. of Construction Services on the importance of having working detectors. HBRA of CT got involved because the original legislation would have subjected all new construction and renovation to the entire State Fire Safety Code, creating conflicts with the State Building Code. (HBRA supported; effective Oct. 1, 2012)

"Leading Our Members to Professional Excellence"

Serving the Residential Development & Construction Industry Through Advocacy, Education & Networking

- ◆ **SB 323**, PA 12- 99, Implements new federal OSHA requirements regarding crane operator safety, providing all four permissible paths to compliance for crane operators and their employers. The original bill would have required all operators of cranes, down to a 2,000 lb lift capacity, to be licensed by the state. (HBRA supported; effective various dates from Oct. 1, 2012, to Oct. 1, 2014)
- ◆ **HB 5035, (one we opposed)**, overturns the tax assessment case of *Kasica v. Columbia*, and thereby authorizes municipalities to raise the valuation on homes and other buildings under construction. The HBRA of CT sought a carve out for 1&2 family home builders to treat homes under construction as their inventory and hold off higher tax valuations until they transfer to a buyer. (HBRA opposed; effective Oct. 1, 2012, and applicable to assessment years commencing on or after said date)

Bills that died:

- ◆ **SB 16**, Would have allowed a home builder's employees to hand out sales brochures, show homes and negotiate with customers the sale of the home builder's own homes without having to have a CT real estate license. The CT Realtors fiercely oppose any additional exemptions to their license law. (HBRA supported)
- ◆ **SB 343**, Would have adopted necessary and reasonable reforms to CT's environmental intervention statute, sec. 22a-19, which was adopted forty years ago before most other environmental protection laws and has come to be abused by opponents of economic and housing development. (HBRA supported)
- ◆ **SB 102**, Would have restated the law that prevents municipalities from adopting local building code provisions. Legislative leaders said it's already the law under our building code statutes and pursuant to a 1992 Attorney General opinion and, therefore, is not necessary. (HBRA supported)
- ◆ **SB 450**, Major energy conservation legislation with many sections, HBRA of CT opposed only sections 3 & 4 that would have required new home builders and commercial builders to inform customers about "any state or federal incentive for energy efficiency"; and section 17 that would have required all homes and certain commercial buildings be constructed to provide service to any make or model of electric vehicle. (HBRA opposed, but offered compromise language)
- ◆ **HB 5385**, Would require all homes be rated for energy efficiency and disclose the rating as a condition of transfer. The bill's jumbled mess of energy efficiency ideas and terminology about energy efficiency, consumption, audits, efficiency services and rating systems was confusing at best, and would have created another roadblock to moving existing housing stock, a prerequisite to selling new homes. (HBRA opposed)
- ◆ **HB 5492**, Would have authorized a new political body, with taxing, lien and other powers, for the purpose of regulating stormwater. With stormwater runoff already heavily regulated by P&Z and wetland commissions, the CT DEEP and federal EPA, enough is enough. (HBRA opposed)

The HBRA of CT worked on many other bills, tracking almost 100 that would have some impact on the diverse land development, home building and remodeling industries. All bills of interest are noted on our web site, and more complete summaries of major bills that passed are also posted there. Go to www.hbact.org, click on "2012 State Legislative Session" under the Government Affairs menu.

Most importantly, members need to get involved and get to know their state legislators. Each member has two, a state Representative who serves in the 151-member State House, and a state Senator who serves in the 36-member State Senate. **Get involved in politics, too.** Support the candidates you think will best represent your interests in Hartford – through money and your time. And then vote and get your family, work colleagues and friends to vote this November. **Policy starts with politics, and politics starts with you.**

Please do not hesitate to contact Bill Ethier, CEO for the HBRA of CT at bethier@hbact.org or 860-216-5858 with any questions or comments about our advocacy work.

Home Building's Economic Impact in Connecticut

**Home Builders Can Help Lead CT's
Economic Recovery!**

100 New SF Homes Create:

- **334 new jobs,**
- **\$29.5 million in wages,**
- **\$5.5 million in RE Taxes, Fees & Charges
paid to State & Local Government
in the 1st Year Alone!¹**

**2011 was the worst year on record for
new housing permits. 2009 & 2010
ranked #2 and #3 for all-time worst.**

**If Government Lets Us,
WE CAN TURN THINGS AROUND!**

**Home building not only itself creates
jobs and leads economic trends
but also**

**HOMES ARE WHERE ALL JOBS
GO AT NIGHT**

Please, let us build them.

¹ 100 multi-family units create 165 jobs, \$14.5 million in wages and \$2.9 million in taxes & fees in the 1st year alone. In the 2d year and subsequent years, on average each 100 housing units (both SF and MF) produce another 52 jobs, \$4.3 in wages and \$1.4 million in taxes & fees for state & local government due to the economic activity of occupants. **For more on Homes Do Pay for Themselves, go to www.hbact.org, and click on "Housing & Economic Development" under the Knowledge Center menu.**