



GrowSmartRI
Sustainable Economic Growth
& Quality of Place

May 25, 2010

The Honorable John J. Tassoni, Jr.
Chair, Housing & Municipal Government Committee
Rhode Island State Senate
State House, Room 310
Providence, RI

RE: Senate Bill No. 2901

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Chairman of the Board

Scott Wolf
Executive Director

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Dear Senator Tassoni:

I am writing on behalf of Grow Smart Rhode Island to express our organization's strong support for S 2901, which would amend the existing laws on statewide planning and land use.

As you know, Grow Smart works closely with both municipalities and the State to promote sound land-use planning throughout Rhode Island. Our work with municipalities includes providing training workshops to expand the capacity of local Planning Boards to plan for future growth. We are therefore keenly aware of the importance of Local Comprehensive Plans, which are the foundation of municipal planning efforts. As Grow Smart's representative to the Division of Planning's Land Use Implementation Committee, I also participated in the Committee's discussions about how the Local Comprehensive Planning Act could be made even more effective.

The recommendations in the proposed legislation are the result of extensive discussions among state planning staff, municipal planners and other interested stakeholders. We believe that they will benefit the municipalities by allowing additional flexibility to individual communities in the construction of their plans, extending the time frame for required updates from 5 years to 10 years, and providing a process for the State to review comprehensive plans while they are still in draft form. We also believe that the amendments in the legislation will improve overall state land-use planning by giving emphasis to issues such as sea-level rise and other natural hazards that were not on the planning radar screen when the original Act was passed.

Grow Smart Rhode Island urges the Committee to send S2901 to the full Senate with a strong recommendation for passage this session.

Sincerely,

Scott Wolf
Executive Director