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Public Hearing Testimony before the  
Connecticut General Assembly's Planning & Development Committee

Deb Polun, Executive Director  
Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA)

*In support of*

*House Bill 6890: An Act Concerning  
Qualifying Transit-Oriented Communities*

March 15, 2023

Distinguished members of the Planning & Development Committee:

Thank you for holding this public hearing today. The Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA) is the state association that works with Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federally designated anti-poverty agencies providing a wide variety of services to nearly 200,000 low- and moderate-income people in all 169 cities and towns across the state. I have included more information about Community Action Agencies at the end of this testimony.

*House Bill 6890: An Act Concerning Qualifying Transit-Oriented  
Communities*

CAFCA supports this bill, which would bring local governments and the state government together to encourage smart, forward-thinking land use planning that will create the kinds of diverse, walkable homes and jobs that we need in places with bus and rail service.

Due to high costs, many of the customers at our Community Action Agencies do not own or have access to a car. For them, living near public transportation is paramount in getting to work, running basic errands, and even going to school. Many local zoning laws, however, make it difficult to build housing in these areas, often leaving limited living options for our customers and others who rely on public transportation to make ends meet.

"Up-zoning" near transit stations and building more multi-family homes in these areas is one way to address a real and worsening issue in Connecticut – the lack of housing that is affordable to people in a range of incomes. By

increasing housing stock, housing prices will stabilize or reduce, and more affordable and diverse living options will be created for people of all ages and income levels, including our most vulnerable residents. This will also support overall economic development by bringing more foot traffic to local businesses, creating new opportunities for property owners, and helping employers attract more workers.

We have seen examples all across the world that people enjoy living in walkable, bike-friendly communities with good public transit; in addition to having a vibrant environment, transit-oriented communities create economic opportunity both in the short- and long-term.

Addressing the housing crisis is one of the most important components of our vision for a more just and equitable world. Supporting initiatives and funding for more affordable and diverse housing options, like transit-oriented development, will help individuals and families thrive, reduce intergenerational poverty, and increase economic mobility.

Thank you all for your consideration of this important proposal – and as always, for your service to our state. Please feel free to get in touch with any questions: [deb@cafca.org](mailto:deb@cafca.org) or 860-832-9438.

