

EDITORIAL.

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Local Legislators Should Support Community Housing Bill

The Adirondack Community Housing Trust was created at the initiative of this region's state Senator, Betty Little, to address the lack of affordable housing in the Adirondacks for year-round residents, especially residents of resort towns, where the influx of second home owners has sent housing prices skyward. Acknowledging the gravity of the issue, the Adirondack Park Agency has adopted a policy to encourage the development of affordable housing wherever possible. And the agency collaborated with the staff of the New York State Assembly and Governor Paterson to create legislation that will allow for the construction of houses on small parcels within three miles of hamlet areas as long as the houses are part of a community trust and remain affordable to future owners. The bill has won the support of groups as diverse as the Warren County Board of Supervisors, the Adirondack Council and The Fund for Lake George. But for reasons that defy logic, Senator Little says she will vote in opposition to the bill when it comes before the State Senate. According to her spokesman, her reservations include the use of the word 'hamlet' in the bill, since there are a few communities within the Adirondack Park that, for obscure reasons, have no designated hamlets. And although the bill was based on the model developed by the Adirondack Community Housing Trust, staff and board members at the Trust have maintained a curious silence when asked their opinions of the bill. We assume that silence is in deference to the Senator's stance. We are not so naïve as to think that politics, personal and partisan, play no role in the development of a legislator's positions. But at the end of the day, a legislator's duty is to represent the best interests of her constituents, and this bill is clearly in the interests of Adirondack residents. It will not solve every problem associated with the high cost of housing in the Adirondacks, but it's a movement in the right direction, and, of even greater importance, an indication that the Adirondack Park Agency is willing to address the needs not only of the environment but of the residents. We hope the Senator changes her mind and votes in favor of the bill.

By Edgar M
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