

Testimony for HB 1573
Municipal and County Government
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Under the guise of “sustainability” and “economic resilience” our federal government is pushing for “regionalism” and “new urbanism” in every state in the country. Some states such as Florida and California are being asked to accommodate several of these programs, while NH has only one called “A Granite State Future”. These programs are made possible by HUD/EPA/DOT grants. In NH, the grants are procured by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission.

The purpose of regionalism/new urbanism were made clear from the recommended readings posted on the <http://www.granitestatefuture.org> website. The following three points were taken from the recommended readings found in the Regional Plan Framework Appendices on Housing and Regionalism: “Restructuring Local Government” (Rusk, David. 1993. **Cities without Suburbs**. Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press). The words emphasized in red are the most troubling. (<http://cms.mildredwarner.org/summaries/rusk1993>)

1. Empowering Urban Counties

*The most direct and efficient way to create metropolitan government in the majority of metro areas is to empower urban county government. **In this scenario, the county government assumes the functions and responsibilities of the municipal governments within its boundaries, and municipalities are abolished.***

2. Consolidating Cities and Counties

*This involves creating area-wide governmental units, focusing on consolidating municipal governments with their surrounding county governments. **Consolidation brings unification of the tax base and centralization of planning and zoning.***

3. Combining Counties into Regional Governments

This involves combining several counties in the same metropolitan area into one regional government.

Challenges to these regional approaches include potential loss of power at the local level.

As NH citizens we object to this blatant attempt to usurp local control. Here are some things we have learned in our experiences after investigating regional planning commissions and their programs.

- RPCs were created by RSA 36 in 1969 but up until now were about limited issues such as common roads or sharing resources such as fire trucks.
- RPCs are unelected boards who are subject to very little oversight by the voters. The legislators, local board members, and voters have demonstrated that they may never have heard of them, or do not understand how they work. Neither the legislature nor the voters get to vote on any of their initiatives even though the RPCs claim their ideas are ‘community based’. Many times RPCs seek to revive issues that voters have rejected numerous times that . (See article below with Hampton videos)
- RPCs have now morphed into something they were never intended to be, concerned with

every aspect of a person's life including the food we eat etc under the guise of economic resilience, sustainability, or social justice. "...public health, transportation, economic development, infrastructure, housing, land use, energy, cultural, historic, and natural resources, and more!" per their website. (Here are two documents on *Health Planning*: <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/omh/documents/disparities.pdf> and *Child Care*: <http://www.planning.org/research/fam.../childcare.pdf>)

- RPCs are part of the push toward regionalism as a political subdivision as opposed to local and state control.
- RPCs cited in one of their documents, concerns about how they would need to overcome "NH's strong tradition of individual property rights" in order to accomplish their goals. (from New Hampshire Sustainable Communities Initiative Project Summary Application)
- RPCs are using our tax money to lobby for legislation that would enable these federal HUD/EPA/DOT programs that become binding upon the towns who participate. This is evident by the fact that they are lobbying for NH laws that would give them more power and authority while taking the vote, and local control, away from the people — all while claiming to be 'advisory only'. Bills that would give RPCs more power because they would allow towns to appoint rather than elect officials, and/or take the vote away with regard to zoning and planning and put the decisions in the hands of a small board.
- RPCs have told us they will continue to impose their agenda even when towns reject their programs, through 'back door' means such as planning and zoning board members favorable to their cause and by passing legislation to give themselves more authority.
- RPCs secure federal grants that require zoning changes as the Obama administration has made it clear this is how they will attempt to impose economic and racial justice in neighborhoods they deem too racially or economically homogenous. See the pain it caused Westchester NY: <http://blog.granitestatefutures.org/2013/09/20/rob-astorino-on-hud-social-engineering/>
- RPCs create public-private partnerships with influence from mostly NGOs, corporations and other private 'stakeholders' who stand to benefit by the results of these programs. Think 'green companies'.
- RPCs, in particular the NRPC, has claimed to want public input and attendance at its Listening Sessions (PR) for Granite State Future, but when that input was given, it was not welcome. The meetings were stacked with paid operatives or 'stakeholders'. Information was presented to the small minority of ordinary citizens in attendance in a dishonest way. Mostly it is private corporations, their foundations, NGOs, and multiple PR firms who are involved. The "crises" they claim are nonexistent and the ideas for these changes as the "remedy" are not coming from the taxpayers. (Hegelian Dialect)
- RPCs have directly attacked activists, misrepresenting themselves repeatedly to those we have done business with, posing as a private commercial entity. They claimed to enjoy copyright on products which are in reality, produced with 100% taxpayer funding and thus subject to NH's RSA 91-A laws. It was not until the NRPC was challenged in court that they ceased and desisted this harassment of individuals sharing the information.
- Regionalists are unhappy with the fact that many people are rejecting their schemes. In NH,

many towns have voted to stop paying dues to the RPCs. In other states, towns and cities are opting out of these regional schemes. This study demonstrates the impatience of the regionalists in reaching their goals. "The Promise and Perils of 'New Regionalist' Approaches to Sustainable Communities"
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1818030

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please read these Patch blogs on these matters, especially the "Open Letter to Legislators" here:
<http://bedford-nh.patch.com/groups/jane-aitkens-blog/p/open-letter-to-nh-legislators>

And...

<http://bedford-nh.patch.com/groups/jane-aitkens-blog/p/bp--agenda-21-iclei-and-regional-planners-response-to504ab451b2>

And...

<http://bedford-nh.patch.com/groups/jane-aitkens-blog/p/bp--the-perfect-society-whose-vision-is-it-anyway>

Agenda 21 can no longer be considered a 'theory' because it clearly states in the federal register that our government's sustainability programs were meant to carry out the goals of Agenda 21...
<http://blog.granitestatefutures.org/2013/08/09/agenda-21-in-pinardville/>

The Federal Government is stepping up plans to impose these programs upon us:
<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2013/07/09/restructure-us-government-to-make-huge-green-changes-in-america-study-proposes/?test=latestnews>

Here is a series of videos that demonstrate a comedy of errors on how local boards and some legislators really have no idea about the RPCs:
<http://blog.granitestatefutures.org/2014/01/12/confusion-surrounding-regional-planning-commissions/>

Master Planner Andrés Duany (Florida) is brutally honest in these short clips about the top-down system that is regionalism and what it would do to control counties, cities and towns and re-orient political subdivisions. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3rGwpyNwnY>