

## From the desk of Peter J. Fusaro



The 2018 CT Legislative Session ended on May 9th, and Bill Ethier provided this summary of critical legislation passed and defeated:

“This legislative session can be summarized as a status quo event. Everything we opposed did not pass or it was

amended to resolve our concerns. On the other hand, the priority bills we wanted also did not pass.

Our policy statement at the beginning of the year said, “do no more damage to Connecticut’s economy and help us lead Connecticut back to economic strength.” So, while some would say, no more damage done is a successful legislative year, it is at least half a victory. However, it does not overcome the state’s need to move the regulatory and tax needles in a positive direction.

Housing permits plummeted over 17% for all of 2017 compared to 2016, and 2016 was down from 2015. We’re headed in the wrong direction. We need the legislature to improve the regulations and taxes that specifically impact housing construction because without housing leading the way, Connecticut’s economy will not recover.

We did defeat legislation that would have hurt our industry, from a new fee on subdivisions to purchase more open space to an ill-conceived inclusionary zoning proposal that would have mandated most multifamily projects statewide to set aside a percentage of units at affordable levels.

But we did not get our top three priorities: property tax relief for homes under construction, positive pro-housing changes and simplification of the state’s zoning enabling act, and positive changes to how advanced treatment wastewater systems are regulated.

Effective advocacy, consistently and professionally delivered by the HBRA of CT, is so important in order to achieve the victories we did get. With more political involvement by our members, we can transform a status quo session into real positive changes in our regulatory and tax environment and move CT forward.”

After 25 years serving the Connecticut HBRA as an outstanding CEO and lobbyist extraordinaire, Bill Ethier retired on June 1st. HBRA members throughout the state gathered on June 7th at the Wallingford Country Club to celebrate Bill, and thank him for his leadership and friendship over the years. Please see coverage of Bill’s retirement party in this issue under State Association News.

A search committee of HBRA leaders, ably led by incoming President, Chris Nelson, spent several months interviewing potential candidates to replace Bill. I am pleased to report that Jim Perras has been hired, and has taken on the role of new CEO of HBRA CT. Jim is an attorney with over 20 years of government experience. He has worked in a number of senior advisory positions to legislative leaders and state agency heads. Jim was most recently employed with the law firm of Wilson Elser, LLP, where he represented a diverse array of clients with complex issues before the state legislature and government agencies. Welcome aboard, Jim!

As the summer approaches, I want to encourage all to attend the 16th Annual NAHB BUILD-PAC Fiano Family Golf Classic on Monday July 9th at the TPC River Highlands in Cromwell. You will have the pleasure of playing 18 holes on this amazing PGA championship course, followed by a gourmet dinner reception under tent.

Help the HBRA of CT retain our #1 standing in the country for a BUILD-PAC fund raising event. For questions, call BUILD-PAC Trustee and Golf Committee co-chair, George LaCava at (860) 632-7863.

All the best,

Peter J. Fusaro  
CGP, CGB, CAPS, GMB, MCGP  
Chairman & President HBRA of CT