



TO: Senate Committee on Community and Urban Affairs  
FROM: Dianne Brake, President  
DATE: February 4, 2010  
RE: Hearing on S82

Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Dianne Brake, President of PlanSmart NJ, where I have been a planner since 1985. I am here today representing PlanSmart NJ as well as the Smart Growth Economic Development Coalition.

PlanSmart joined this coalition because it shares our goal of pursuing successful redevelopment and Smart Growth. We also joined because after conducting our Smart Growth Economy Project, we recognized that land use plans and the land use decision-making process are not based on any understanding of the needs of the economy. And today, for government decisions to be made without understanding their impact on the economy is both irrational and dangerous to our future quality of life.

That is one reason why PlanSmart NJ supports S82. We no longer have the luxury to toy with other people's money. They will – and have been – going to other states where this capricious decision-making process does not exist.

But there is another reason why we support this idea – we support planning. Sitting down and thinking about the conditions in your town, about what goals you have for the future, and then making your zoning and other regulatory and investment decisions accordingly – we think that is a good idea.

And we have thought so for a long time. This very issue was considered by the State Planning Commission when I was a member back in the 1990s and we came to the same conclusion: When an application is filed to carry out an adopted plan, there should be some level of certainty that this is what the town has decided it wants and that someone who proposes to build it is likely to get an approval. The plan is, after all, what they have spent thousands of the tax-payers money on. Municipal officials should stand by their plan!

Although the need for this change has been long understood, we did not have the benefit of the leadership that you are showing today. We thank you for that.

Of course no plan can foresee all the issues that an application may cause to arise. S82 does not change the negotiations that will take place after an application is made and before a decision is rendered. And there is always the possibility that new information that affects the health and safety of the citizens may arise. S82 allows for these new important considerations to be taken into account.

All S82 does is to strengthen the role of rational forethought over capricious action. Our name is our position – Plan **smart**, New Jersey!