

To: Anthony Hood, Chairman

From: Allie Littleton

Date: May 21, 2009

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**Comments for Public Hearing on ZC #08-06-9**

My name is Allie Littleton and I'm a fifth grader at Oyster Adams Bilingual School. I recently won an essay contest for ten year olds sponsored by the Marriott Corporation. The topic was "Greener is Cleaner". My essay was about how it would be good for the environment to change the zoning laws so that people could rent out apartments or rooms in their houses. So I'd like to read my essay that supports the Office of Planning's Recommendation #2 to allow accessory dwelling units for single family homes as a matter of right here in DC, a trend that seems to be taking hold in cities across the country.

**ZONING COMMISSION**  
CASE No. 08-06-9  
**ZONING COMMISSION**  
EXHIBIT No. 10  
District of Columbia  
CASE NO.08-06-9  
EXHIBIT NO.10



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**House Sharing for Greener Living**

by Allie Littleton

I recently moved into a new house. In my old house, we rented out our basement apartment to a young couple. The law says that we can't rent out an apartment in our new house without a "Special Exception", even though it is much bigger than our old house. This same law affects many houses and people around the country. My idea is to have the government change the law that says there can't be more than one family living in a house at one time.

Houses are getting bigger and families are getting smaller. This combination is not green. In 1940, the average number of people living in each house was 3.7. Now, the average number is 2.6. People now have an average of 900 square feet of living space per person, but, in 1950, people had an average of 290 square feet per person. There's definitely enough room to fit two families in many of today's homes. If two families lived in one home, the use of heat and air conditioning wouldn't be much more than if one family were living in the home.

Each year in the United States the population is increasing by approximately 2.67 million people and about 1 million new houses are being built. Building a new house generates about 50 tons of carbon dioxide, which causes global warming. After a new home is built, it will emit approximately 450 tons of carbon over time while people live in it, so the total carbon produced by a home is about 500 tons.

Remodeling a home to add an apartment generates about 15 tons of carbon. Assuming two families use 25% more energy than one family in a home, the additional



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carbon produced by a second family is 112.5 tons over time (25% times 450). That plus the 15 tons of carbon generated by remodeling to add the apartment equals 127.5 tons over the lifetime of the two-family home.

That means the carbon savings over time from sharing a house instead of building a new house would be 372.5 tons of carbon (500 tons minus 127.5 tons). There would also be savings because more people could live closer to their jobs and public transportation instead of living in the far-out suburbs where there's land to build new homes.

If the law is changed, and 1% of the households in the top ten metro areas rent out apartments, 305,000 new homes wouldn't be built, saving 113,610,904 tons of carbon. That's like taking 19 million cars off the road for a year (the average car emits six tons of carbon per year). Probably even more than 1% would do it if the law allowed.

Global warming hurts our planet. People want to help and would gladly rent out apartments in their homes. They would even make money, which would help in this economy. All we need is to convince our political leaders to change the law so we can do more to save Earth.