



TESTIMONY BY MAYOR MARCIA LECLERC, TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD

March 4, 2016

House Bill 5484, An Act Concerning The Connecticut City And Town Development Act.

Senator Osten, Representative Miller and the members of the Planning and Development Committee.

Good morning. My name is Marcia Leclerc and I am the Mayor of East Hartford. I am before you today to encourage your support of House Bill 5484, An Act Concerning The Connecticut City And Town Development Act.

The intent of the Connecticut City and Town Development Act is to assist municipalities as they improve their communities through; loans to acquire property, reduce unemployment, alleviate blight, and upgrade building stock. This public act is a tool, which towns like East Hartford use to spur much needed economic development and will provide a substantial benefit to our community. Adoption of this legislation will help East Hartford to restore buildings to productive use, appropriately develop vacant land, preserve historic properties and create good paying jobs.

However, there are a few unintended consequences in the current language. Section 7-485(a)(2) requires a finding that blight and deterioration exist in a municipality. This is too broad a finding for many municipalities including East Hartford. The proposed legislation would fix this issue by broadening the description to include renovation, rehabilitation or construction the municipality would substantially benefit from.

Additionally, the language requiring a referendum in sections 7-485(b) are not consistent with how many towns typically adopt or utilize the various statutory development tools available under the Connecticut General Statutes. For example, a town referendum is not required to create an Enterprise Zone, provide tax benefits or provide tax increment financing. I strongly urge the adoption of the newly proposed language.

Therefore, I would ask that the members of this committee vote in support of the proposed language change which would allow cities and towns like East Hartford to continue to implement the intent of the legislation by improving our communities through development and redevelopment.

Thank you for your time today.

Sincerely,

Marcia A. Leclerc

Mayor

Town of East Hartford