



# State of Connecticut

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

### Testimony

#### Committee on Government Administration and Elections

February 20, 2008

#### In Support of Raised Bill 203: AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE OF STATE REAL PROPERTY

Good morning Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso, and the members of the Committee on Government Administration and Elections. I am Elizabeth Ritter, State Representative from the 38<sup>th</sup> District, representing the Towns of Waterford and Montville. I am here to support Raised Bill 203: AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE OF STATE REAL PROPERTY and to offer some suggestions, from my perspective, for its improvement.

I would like to thank the committee for raising this bill. I am sure it is no surprise to you that my interest comes from the over 15 year-long experience the Town of Waterford has had in working with the State to determine the future of the former Seaside property. I welcome the provisions intended to bring additional clarity to the process used to dispose of state surplus property that are contained in lines 98 – 100, 108 – 114, and 137 - 147. I support the addition of a conditional approval as well as the ability of a committee to choose to extend its deliberations before making a decision on disposition. These provisions would have made our experience with the Seaside property possibly less confusing and more deliberate.

Much of our frustration with the Seaside process stems from the 15 years of work done by the Town of Waterford and the State, together, under the announced intention of the State to sell the property. At times, there was little or no progress for months or years. After years of work with a chosen developer, the final legislative committee, this one, determined that the necessary steps to a sale had not been correctly followed and voted not to approve the transaction. The Governor then announced that the State was not going to be selling the property after all. There is no present plan for its use. Four

formerly beautiful and historically significant buildings on the property continue to deteriorate while a plan to “mothball” them is put together.

**It is my hope this committee will pursue additional language to strengthen the commitment on the part of the State to follow through on its announced intentions in future similar situations, behave in a more open and predictable manner, and do its best to protect and maximize its valuable assets.**

We can do a better job managing our affairs, and we hold a responsibility to our constituents to do so.

Thank you, and I will be happy to answer any questions.