



1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut
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PRESERVING, CONSERVING AND GROWING SMART

1000 Friends of Connecticut
Testimony on RB 5589 AN ACT CONCERNING BROWNFIELDS
Respectfully Submitted to the Commerce Committee
February 28, 2008

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. My name is Heidi Green and I'm president of the statewide smart growth education and advocacy organization, 1000 Friends of Connecticut. 1000 Friends is a broad, politically and geographically diverse coalition of individuals and organizations committed to growing robust cities, walkable vibrant neighborhoods, healthy natural habitats, clean air and water, and a viable agricultural economy here in Connecticut. The productive reuse of Brownfields is paramount to achieving our smart growth goals.

I also testify as an appointed member of the Governor's Responsible Growth Task Force. The Task Force was created in last year's Act Concerning Responsible Growth. Its membership consisted of gubernatorial and legislative appointees.

By far the most thoughtful and important product of the Task Force's work is the definition and principles for responsible growth we strenuously negotiated then approved, unanimously. They are found in Appendix B of the Task Force's report to the Governor. 1000 Friends of Connecticut recommends that the merit ranking in Section 1(d) of An Act Concerning Brownfields be redrafted to include compliance with those responsible growth principles. Our valuable and limited state resources should not be granted merely on the basis of what increases *one* municipality's tax base, or the *number* of jobs projected. Instead, grants

should be ranked based on more comprehensive criteria, reflecting the broader, long-term interests of the State. That criteria is found in the principles adopted by the Task Force.

We also suggest that the committee support ranking eligible borrowers by compliance with responsible growth principles -- Section 2(b) and 2(d). We would require redevelopment plans -- Section 2(g) -- address how a redevelopment advances responsible growth in the state. We would ask loan applicants to agree to comply with responsible growth principles for the term of the loan. Finally, we suggest tax credits be awarded contingent on project compliance with responsible growth principles.

We believe that strong principles consistently applied will insure that state funds are responsibly allocated, and that we invest enthusiastically in developments that advance smart, sustainable, responsible growth i.e.: “economic, social and environmental development that uses land and resources in ways that enhance the long-term quality of life for Connecticut’s current and future generations. Responsible growth supports a vibrant and resilient economy and preserves the natural resources upon both of which that quality of life depends. Responsible growth maximizes previous investments in existing infrastructure while preserving distinctive landscapes, historic structures, landmarks and villages.

Responsible growth requires leadership and governance of the highest caliber to prioritize public decisions in a manner that maximizes the long-term benefits to the state’s residents and communities. It demands a collaborative approach to analysis, decision-making and evaluation between and among all levels of government to ensure consistency with integrated local, regional and state-wide vision, plans and strategies.”¹

1000 Friends of Connecticut lauds the Commerce Committee for its strong, bi-partisan leadership in growing Connecticut responsibly. We hope you consider us your partner in that work. Thank you.

Responsible Growth Principles:

Focus on Redevelopment

- Redevelop First -- Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure rather than the construction of new infrastructure in undeveloped areas.
- Revitalize Connecticut's central cities to take advantage of existing infrastructure and their locations as centers of economic and cultural importance.
- Give preference to redevelopment of brownfields, preservation, and reuse of historic structures and rehabilitation of existing housing and schools.

Be Fair

- Encourage interlocal cooperation.
- Promote equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development and diminish the competition for revenue that biases land use decisions.
- Provide technical and strategic support for inclusive community planning to ensure social, economic, and environmental justice.
- Make regulatory and permitting processes for development clear, transparent, cost-effective, and oriented to encourage responsible growth and regional equity.

Expand Housing Opportunities

- Support the rehabilitation and construction of housing to meet the needs of all people regardless of abilities, income levels, and household types.
- Coordinate the provision of housing with the location of jobs, transit, and services.

- Promote a range of attainable housing choices that provides housing for people who work in the area and that leads to diverse communities.

Concentrate Development

- Support development that is compact, conserves land, integrates uses, and fosters a sense of place.
- Revitalize and protect existing village centers.
- Create walkable districts in or adjacent to existing centers, making full use of existing buildings and infrastructure, and mixing commercial, civic, cultural, educational and recreational activities with open space and housing for diverse communities.

Provide Transportation Choice

- Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors.
- Increase access to transportation alternatives, in all communities, including public transit (with flexible schedules), bicycling, and walking.
- Invest strategically in transportation infrastructure that decreases annual lane miles while increasing transit passenger miles traveled, and increases rail freight while decreasing road freight.

Conserve Natural Resources

- Reduce waste of water, energy, greenhouse gases, and materials, and increase our supply of renewable energy.
- Expand land conservation efforts in appropriate areas.
- Protect water resources.
- Protect and restore biodiversity, environmentally sensitive lands, natural resources, food security, wildlife habitats, and cultural and historic landscapes.
- Increase the quantity, quality, and accessibility of open space.
- Lead by example and support conservation strategies, clean power, and innovative industries.

- Construct and promote buildings and infrastructure that use land, energy, water, and materials efficiently.

Plan Regionally

- Support the development and implementation of local and regional plans that have broad public support and are consistent with statewide plans and with these principles.
- Encourage development projects, land and water conservation, transportation and housing that have a regional or multi-community benefit.
- Consider the long-term costs and benefits to the commonweal of the state.
- Increase Job Opportunities in Appropriate Locations
- Attract new and support the growth of existing businesses with meaningful, well-paying jobs in appropriate locations, preferably near housing, infrastructure, water, and transportation options.
- Expand access to educational and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Strengthen sustainable production of goods and services.
- Support economic development in industry clusters consistent with statewide, regional, and local plans.

¹ Report of the Responsible Growth Task Force to Governor M. Jodi Rell, February 4, 2008, Appendix B, page 10.

