



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing -- February 25, 2008
Planning and Development Committee

Testimony submitted by Commissioner Gina McCarthy
Department of Environmental Protection

Bill No. 39, An Act Concerning Responsible Growth

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Bill No.39, Governor Rell's bill on responsible growth. This bill continues efforts begun by the Governor in 2006 with Executive Order 15 and last year's Responsible Growth legislation Public Act 07-239. Over the last few months I have had the pleasure to work with a diverse group of stakeholders including many of my colleagues addressing you today as a member of the Responsible Growth task force created by PA 07-239. In a very short period of time this task force was able to establish a strong foundation for future work by articulating a clear set of principles to guide the State and ensure the "long-term quality of life for Connecticut's current and future generation".

Today, Bill No. 39 outlines the next steps. The creation of a Responsible Growth Cabinet, on which I would proudly serve, provides a mechanism for continuing this important work and brings together the necessary state resources to allow for efficient and informed decision-making as we implement these principles. While it may be obvious that much of my agency's interest falls under the category of protecting our natural resources and open space I am convinced that our ability to do this rests on the State's continued strong economic growth and the revitalization of our cities. Working together with my colleagues will help ensure that opportunities to reuse brownfields and support transit-oriented development will be identified early on.

From my view, adherence to these principles will protect and conserve our water resources, save energy, reduce greenhouse gases, protect and restore biodiversity, and increase open space; in short, make my job as Commissioner of Environmental Protection easier.

Directing incentives, as this bill does, toward planning and projects at the state, regional and local level that follow the principles of Responsible Growth and following that up with the necessary administrative support should go a long way toward ensuring Connecticut's high "quality of life". The bill will help assure that future investment decisions in Connecticut are made in a manner that is consistent with responsible growth development criteria. Others before you today have and will to speak to the specifics of the proposed bill but I assure you that my staff and I are committed to continuing this work with all stakeholders. I would like to thank the Governor for her leadership, my colleagues and the members of this committee for their on-going efforts to make Connecticut a place where we can all be proud to live. I urge your support of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Tom Tyler, Legislative Program Manager, at 424-3099 or Robert LaFrance at 424-3401.