

HOUSING COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY OF ALAN E. GREEN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF HARTFORD

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2009

Good afternoon Co-Committee Chairs, Committee members, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Alan E. Green and I am the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Hartford.

I am here today to support Proposed Bill No. 5074 funds for the Hartford Housing Authority for operational costs of state moderate rental units and Proposed Bill No. 5072 funds for grants to housing authorities for capital improvements to state moderate rental units.

The Authority is eager to move forward with these projects designated as economic stimulus programs that would serve our most vulnerable citizens, as well as provide education and training, and job opportunities in project development, finance, and management.

The Country's declining economy has become a major issue for Connecticut and the economies of Connecticut's Cities. Affordable rental properties will become the alternative for many families and individuals searching for immediate relief from displacement due to single-family home foreclosure. Residents of multi-family property foreclosure forced by lending institutions to vacate will surely need replacement housing as well. The jobless rate is expected to reach a staggering 8% very soon.

With those issues in mind, we discuss today, the funding necessary to commence the work necessary to jump-start the Westbrook Village and Bowles Park developments.

**The Re-development of Westbrook Village & Bowles Park:**

The largest of the Housing Authority's state financed public housing and currently housing approximately 300 individuals and families, Westbrook Village and Bowles Park, built in 1949 and 1950 respectively, consists of 770 units of state financed low and moderate income housing. Westbrook and Bowles present a unique opportunity to "start over" and think "outside the box" by replacing housing units with *homes*, creating a community that includes retail, commercial, recreational establishments and possibly educational programs as part of the new development structure. All of which shall be open to the surrounding neighborhoods, reducing the "island effect" experienced by so many public housing developments.

Located on a major thoroughfare and bordered by two towns, (West Hartford and Bloomfield) each complex represents a major opportunity to create a blended environment conducive to interaction with and support of surrounding neighborhoods and economies. With a services enhanced environment, residents have access to information, easier access to health care, education and job growth opportunities that supports the goal of creating successful households, for adults and children. The effort thus far has included and will continue to include the interests of first and foremost, the residents of Westbrook and Bowles, the existing businesses in the area, as well as the University of Hartford, which borders much of Westbrook Village and Bowles Park.

*What it takes to make this happen:*

The Housing Authority and its new development team have committed resources to develop this and other projects within the city of Hartford. Needed are grant funds to support the planning process that includes many stakeholders; Residents, Federal, State, city, and town leaders, community planning and development specialists, as well as educational and clerical representatives. It will take a herculean effort for a design team of architects to translate information and consensus, reduce it to drawings, and obtain cost estimates from contractors, and creating this new community. The estimated cost to re-build these residences is approximately \$200 to \$300 million dollars.

Regarding jobs creation, the Authority has in the past, and continues to promote the HUD Section 3 program, and the DOL Youth-Build Program that provide funds for developing and supporting training and education for persons interested in the field of property development, management, and the continuation of formal education.

Thank you for you attention.