

Planning and Development Committee  
February 18, 2009

**Proposed Bill No. 5861**  
**AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCESSING OF MUNICIPAL APPLICATIONS FOR  
STATE PERMITS**

Testimony of Elsie Bisset  
Economic Development Coordinator  
Town of Killingly

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman and honorable members of the Planning and Development Committee.

My name is Elsie Bisset; I am the Economic Development Coordinator for the Town of Killingly, which is a Town of over 16,000 citizens. Killingly is one of the towns along the Interstate 395 corridor in the northeastern part of the state, having 4 exits on the interstate and an industrial park which is full to capacity with over 3 million square feet of active industrial businesses.

I am here today to speak in favor of the Bill on behalf of the Town of Killingly, to express our support for Proposed Bill No. 5861, and to urge for favorable consideration. As a state that is focused on implementing pro business policies and as an economic developer who works first hand with interested clients, I want to emphasize the need for a streamlined development process. Just as our local land use commissions have State deadlines for public hearings and their decisions to be made in a timely manner, so too should State agencies have deadlines for their review processes and the issuance of permits. This Bill proposes that deadlines for the processing of permits issued to municipalities be established.

As the project manager for many development projects, there is a large amount of coordination between various state agencies to move the project forward through the stages of development. From the conceptual stage to the planning stage, the permitting stages and then the construction or implementation stages, it is important that the Department of Environmental Protection review the application materials and make decisions in a timely manner and then communicate their decisions or their need for additional justification or collateral materials, to the municipalities so as to further the project in an efficient manner.

I would like to go further and request that this proposed Bill also apply to applications and permits which are submitted to State agencies from land owners and business owners in the State of Connecticut. As citizens in Connecticut it is our responsibility to request that every development project be valued for its contributions to our economy while protecting the natural resources for present and future generations.

Let me give you one example of a large scale redevelopment project in the Town of Killingly where the Town Manager and I met with the Department of Environmental Protection with the potential buyers over 6 months prior to the purchase of the site in order to establish general timelines for permitting and general expectations on environmental issues and requirements. Once the property was purchased and the financing in place, the new owner was making mortgage and interest payments on property which he owned but hadn't obtained DEP permits for remediation for over 7 months. Time and money was wasted during this period. The Town assisted the property owner in working with all of the State agencies which were involved in this project. It takes a team to develop a project. Various DEP staff worked on this project and was courteous and communicative during the process, but the remediation plan approval could have been shortened if there were deadlines. I realize there may be times when an extension may have to be used, but there should be timelines in effect so that the municipalities and agencies will know what is to be expected. This will go a long way in making our State competitive and improve operations on the State level.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

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