



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
**Department of
Information Technology**



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Department of Information Technology
Michael Varney, Director of Security
Testimony before the Planning and Development Committee
March 2, 2009

Chairmen Coleman and Sharkey, and Honorable Members of the Planning and Development Committee, I am Michael Varney, Director of Information Technology Security, Department of Information Technology.

I thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today concerning HB 6469, An Act Concerning Smart Growth and State Planning.

I am here to testify concerning Section 3 and Section 4 which would abolish the Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) Council by repealing CGS Section 4d-90.

The Geospatial Information Systems Council is comprised of representatives from state and municipal government whose business needs require GIS data. The GIS Council was formed in January 2006 with the appointment of members from municipalities, state agencies, and higher education.

Various active Working Groups of the GIS Council and the Council are very active and meet regularly demonstrating the significant commitment by Connecticut's GIS practitioners in improving coordination and planning.

The GIS Council has developed a Strategic and Business Plan. The plan was formally approved by the GIS Council in September 2007 and has established twelve data subcommittees to formulate framework GIS datasets for Connecticut and created an updated and more comprehensive report *Connecticut' Geographic Framework Data*.

Each subcommittee consists of stakeholders from state, local, private and federal interests and will serve as a steward for the creation and maintenance of data policies, and procedures associated with each of the framework dataset themes.

In addition an Education and Training Workgroup has developed and maintains the GIS Council's website to make it easier for visitors to find information about GIS, education and training events in CT, upcoming meetings, and other topics of general interest to the state's GIS user community.

A newsletter, titled Connecticut Geo-Focus was initiated and is published quarterly. The newsletter contains information and stories about GIS use in the state, data development and Council activities. An electronic version of the newsletter is available on the Council's website. This work group has also coordinate statewide and specific training and outreach activities such as an annual all-day "GIS Day event" and surveys to support these activities.

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We have collaborated extensively and successfully to deliver an enterprise GIS system that operates at DOIT on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and other state customers. The GIS Council has leveraged state and local resources to sponsor several coordinated aerial photographic state-wide flyovers. Another major accomplishment of the GIS Council has been to promote state-wide standards for GIS data.

There has been no cost to the GIS Council but only benefits.

Additional detailed information about the GIS Council is available on our website, located at www.ct.gov/gis.

We ask for your consideration of preserving this valuable and active council and appreciate your consideration.

Thank you.