



**STATEMENT REGARDING
Regionalism and Smart Growth Concepts**

**Planning & Development Committee
March 2nd, 2009**

The MetroHartford Alliance is Hartford's Chamber of Commerce and the region's economic development leader. Our investors include businesses of all sizes, health care providers, institutions of higher education, and 34 municipalities. The Alliance's mission is to ensure that the Hartford Region competes aggressively and successfully for jobs, talent and capital so that it thrives as one of the country's premier places for all people to live, work, play, and raise a family.

Specifically, we would like to offer comments for your consideration on the following bills before you today:

House Bill 6585: AAC *Regionalism*

We are in general support of this proposed bill, as we are in support of establishing Economic Development Districts in Connecticut, as drafted in Senate Bill 888, *AAC Regional Economic Development*. However, in Section 2 of House Bill 6585, it is proposed that the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management be the approving authority for any such plan, and we feel strongly that the review and approval of Regional Economic Development Plans should rest with the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development.

House Bill 6588: AAC *Training for Local Land Use Commissioners*

In recent years land use decisions have become much more complex and represent major long-range financial consequences for Connecticut's

municipalities. Consistent training and continuing education for land use officials will help ensure that prudent decisions are made.

House Bill 6589: *AAC Land Use Appeals*

We are in favor of a separate docket for land use and administrative appeals matters which would expedite land use issues, as they will be heard by judges that have specific experience in land use and administrative manners.

House Bill 5544: *AAC Regional Economic Development Plans*

As stated earlier, we are in support of adopting Comprehensive Regional Economic Development Strategies (CEDS), however, this proposed legislation seems to make the adoption of the CEDS contingent upon the municipalities involved entering into an agreement to share revenues for real and personal property taxes. We do not believe the adoption of a Regional Economic Development Plan should be dependent upon any tax revenue sharing between municipalities identified in said plan.

As an economic development organization and the capital city's chamber of commerce, we hope you will continue to work with us to help Connecticut stand out as a premier place to do business and create jobs by pursuing regional cooperation and smart growth development practices in our state. In particular, we thank the committee for your consideration of our specific comments on House Bills 6585, 6588, 6589, and 5544.

We look forward to working with you to make Connecticut more competitive. Thank you.