



TESTIMONY

of the

CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES

to the

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 6, 2009

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local governments - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on the following bill of interest to towns and cities:

S. B. 1037, "An Act Concerning Expedited Approval of Transportation Projects and Economic Development Projects"

CCM supports this bill, and urge you to amend it.

S.B. 1037 would allow municipalities to utilize licensed professional engineers to certify that work on economic development projects is being done in conformance with state permit requirements, to reduce permit-approval backlogs in state agencies.

We urge the Committee to delete sections 1 & 4. These sections are unnecessary, as CGS 20-299 already prescribes the intensive licensing process that engineers must go through.

All that is needed is for someone to be licensed as a professional engineer by the Department of Consumer Protection under Chapter 361. If engineers behave improperly, they would lose their professional engineering license. This should be explicit in the bill – then there'd be no need for sections 1 and 4, which would add bureaucracy and costs.

-Over-

If the State feels the need to ensure more certification, i.e., to show that the person specifically knows about “transportation” or “economic development,” it could require engineers to show that they’ve done that type of work and then approve them for performing the work, in a simple and non-costly manner.

A benefit of this kind of initiative is that overworked DECD and DOT employees would not need to have to deal with every detail of every project – they would just oversee the work done by the professional engineers, see that everything was properly certified, etc.

A model is the “licensed environmental professional” program that DEP uses for brownfield remediation.

Currently, the permit and review process is a laborious and lugubrious one that is extremely inefficient and time-consuming. In order for Connecticut to compete in a global economy, we have to streamline, look at things differently, and eliminate old ways that hinder progress. It is more efficient and effective to use state employees for oversight purposes, rather than review and oversight agents.

S.B. 1037 is a rational approach that increases efficiency, without sacrificing professionalism and public safety.

CCM urges the Committee to delete Sections 1 and 4, then favorably report S.B. 1037.

Thank you.

##

For more information, please contact Ron Thomas or Gian-Carl Casa of CCM at (203) 498-3000.