



General Assembly

January Session, 2009

**Raised Bill No. 888**

LCO No. 3344

\*03344\_\_\_\_\_CE\_\*

Referred to Committee on Commerce

Introduced by:

(CE)

**AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2009*) (a) Any of the following  
2 entities may, either individually or in conjunction with one or more  
3 other such entities, establish a regional economic development district  
4 for the purposes of sections 1 to 3, inclusive, 7 and 8 of this act and  
5 sections 32-10 and 16a-27 of the general statutes, as amended by this  
6 act: (1) A regional economic development commission formed under  
7 section 7-137 of the general statutes; (2) any organization that has a  
8 plan that meets the requirements of section 2 of this act that has been  
9 approved by the Assistant Secretary of Economic Development of the  
10 United States Department of Commerce; (3) a corporation exempt from  
11 federal income tax under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code;  
12 (4) another regional economic development commission or corporation  
13 formed under any other provision of the general statutes or any special  
14 act; (5) a regional planning agency organized under the provisions of  
15 chapter 127 of the general statutes; (6) a regional council of  
16 governments organized under sections 4-124i to 4-124p, inclusive, of  
17 the general statutes; or (7) a regional council of elected officials

18 organized under the provisions of chapter 50 of the general statutes for  
19 planning and implementation of regional economic development. The  
20 entity or entities establishing a regional economic development district  
21 shall provide for a board of directors of the district.

22 (b) The boundaries of such districts shall, to the extent practicable,  
23 be contiguous with boundaries of labor market areas, as determined by  
24 the Labor Commissioner, or encompass a region that has developed a  
25 plan that meets the requirements of section 2 of this act and has been  
26 approved by the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic  
27 Development.

28 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2009*) (a) The board of directors of a  
29 regional economic development district shall prepare and approve a  
30 comprehensive economic development strategy for the district to  
31 address identified economic development problems in a manner that  
32 promotes economic development and opportunity, fosters effective  
33 transportation access, improves workforce development, enhances and  
34 protects the environment and balances resources through sound  
35 management of development. A comprehensive economic  
36 development strategy shall contain:

37 (1) An analysis of economic and community development problems  
38 and opportunities, including incorporation of any relevant material or  
39 suggestions from other government-sponsored or supported plans;

40 (2) Background and history of economic development in the district,  
41 with a discussion of the economy, geography, population, labor force,  
42 resources and the environment;

43 (3) A discussion of community participation in the planning efforts  
44 for the strategy;

45 (4) The goals and objectives for (A) taking advantage of the  
46 opportunities in the district, and (B) solving the economic  
47 development problems of the district;

48 (5) A plan of action, including suggested projects to implement the  
49 goals and objectives set forth in subdivision (4) of this subsection; and

50 (6) Performance measures that will be used to evaluate whether and  
51 to what extent such goals and objectives have been met.

52 (b) Upon approving the comprehensive economic development  
53 strategy for a district, the board of directors of the district shall submit  
54 the strategy to each regional council of governments, regional council  
55 of elected officials and regional planning agencies serving any portion  
56 of the geographical area of such district, except if such regional council  
57 of elected officials or regional planning agencies are not part of the  
58 regional economic development district pursuant to section 1 of this  
59 act. The regional council of governments, regional council of elected  
60 officials and regional planning agencies shall study such proposal and  
61 shall report their findings and recommendations thereon to the district  
62 not later than ninety days after the receipt of the strategy.

63 (c) After review and comment on the comprehensive economic  
64 development strategy under subsection (b) of this section, the board of  
65 directors of the district shall submit the strategy to the Commissioner  
66 of Economic and Community Development and the Secretary of the  
67 Office of Policy and Management. The secretary and the commissioner  
68 shall review the strategy and, not later than forty-five days after  
69 receiving the strategy, shall either notify said board of directors of  
70 approval of the strategy or provide the board with recommendations  
71 for modifying the strategy for consistency with the state plan of  
72 conservation and development adopted pursuant to chapter 297 of the  
73 general statutes and the state-wide comprehensive economic  
74 development strategy required under section 32-10 of the general  
75 statutes, as amended by this act. If neither the commissioner nor the  
76 secretary notifies the board within said forty-five days, the strategy  
77 shall be deemed to have been approved. If said commissioner or  
78 secretary recommends modifications, the board shall modify the  
79 strategy in accordance with such recommendations and resubmit the

80 strategy for review in the same manner as for the original submission  
81 of the strategy.

82 (d) The board of directors of a regional economic development  
83 district shall, annually, report to the commissioner and the secretary on  
84 progress made in implementing the comprehensive economic  
85 development strategy. A new or revised strategy shall be developed at  
86 least once every five years. The board shall submit each new or revised  
87 strategy for review and approval in accordance with the same  
88 procedure as for a new strategy under subsections (b) and (c) of this  
89 section.

90 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2009*) (a) Upon approval by the  
91 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development and the  
92 Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management of a comprehensive  
93 economic development strategy for a regional economic development  
94 district, the board of directors of said district may submit the strategy  
95 to the Assistant Secretary of the United States Department of  
96 Commerce for approval pursuant to Chapter 38 of Title 42 of the  
97 United States Code and regulations adopted pursuant to said Chapter  
98 38, unless such comprehensive economic development strategy was  
99 submitted to and approved by said Assistant Secretary before the  
100 effective date of this section.

101 (b) The board of directors of a regional economic development  
102 district that submits a comprehensive economic development strategy  
103 to the Assistant Secretary of the United States Department of  
104 Commerce or has previously submitted and received the approval of  
105 said Assistant Secretary of such a strategy may apply to said Assistant  
106 Secretary for federal designation of the economic development district  
107 pursuant to Chapter 38 of Title 42 of the United States Code and  
108 regulations adopted pursuant to said Chapter 38. Approval by the  
109 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development of the  
110 comprehensive economic development strategy under section 2 of this  
111 act shall be deemed to meet the requirements of said Chapter 38 and

112 regulations with regard to gubernatorial approval of the economic  
113 development district application.

114 Sec. 4. Section 32-1o of the general statutes is repealed and the  
115 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

116 (a) On or before July 1, 2009, and every five years thereafter, the  
117 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, within  
118 available appropriations, shall prepare an economic strategic plan for  
119 the state in consultation with the Secretary of the Office of Policy and  
120 Management, the Commissioners of Environmental Protection and  
121 Transportation, the Labor Commissioner, the executive directors of the  
122 Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, the Connecticut Development  
123 Authority, the Connecticut Innovations, Inc., the Commission on  
124 Culture and Tourism and the Connecticut Health and Educational  
125 Facilities Authority, and the president of the Office of Workforce  
126 Competitiveness, or their respective designees, and any other agencies  
127 the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development deems  
128 appropriate.

129 (b) In developing the plan, the Commissioner of Economic and  
130 Community Development shall:

131 (1) Ensure that the plan is consistent with (A) the text and locational  
132 guide map of the state plan of conservation and development, adopted  
133 pursuant to chapter 297, (B) the long-range state housing plan,  
134 adopted pursuant to section 8-37t, and (C) the transportation strategy  
135 adopted pursuant to section 13b-57g;

136 (2) (A) Consult regional councils of governments, regional planning  
137 organizations [ ] and regional economic development agencies [ ] and  
138 (i) consider local and economic development district strategy and  
139 ensure, to the extent practicable, that the plan is consistent with the  
140 local and economic development district strategies, and (ii) identify  
141 any inconsistencies between the state strategy and the local and  
142 economic development district strategies and provide justification for

143 each inconsistency. Such state strategy shall, on a state-wide basis,  
144 address the issues and include the content required for a regional  
145 comprehensive economic development strategy as provided in  
146 subsection (a) of section 2 of this act.

147 (B) Consult interested state and local officials, entities involved in  
148 economic and community development, stakeholders and business,  
149 economic, labor, community and housing organizations;

150 (3) Consider (A) regional economic, community and housing  
151 development plans, and (B) applicable state and local workforce  
152 investment strategies;

153 (4) Assess and evaluate the economic development challenges and  
154 opportunities of the state and against the economic development  
155 competitiveness of other states and regions; and

156 (5) Host regional forums to provide for public involvement in the  
157 planning process.

158 (c) The strategic plan required under this section shall include, but  
159 not be limited to, the following:

160 (1) A review and evaluation of the economy of the state. Such  
161 review and evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, a sectoral  
162 analysis, housing market and housing affordability analysis, labor  
163 market and labor quality analysis, demographic analysis and include  
164 historic trend analysis and projections;

165 (2) A review and analysis of factors, issues and forces that impact or  
166 impede economic development and responsible growth in Connecticut  
167 and its constituent regions. Such factors, issues or forces shall include,  
168 but not be limited to, transportation, including, but not limited to,  
169 commuter transit, rail and barge freight, technology transfer,  
170 brownfield remediation and development, health care delivery and  
171 costs, early education, primary education, secondary and  
172 postsecondary education systems and student performance, business

173 regulation, labor force quality and sustainability, social services costs  
174 and delivery systems, affordable and workforce housing cost and  
175 availability, land use policy, emergency preparedness, taxation,  
176 availability of capital and energy costs and supply;

177 (3) Identification and analysis of economic clusters that are growing  
178 or declining within the state;

179 (4) An analysis of targeted industry sectors in the state that (A)  
180 identifies those industry sectors that are of current or future  
181 importance to the growth of the state's economy and to its global  
182 competitive position, (B) identifies what those industry sectors need  
183 for continued growth, and (C) identifies, those industry sectors current  
184 and potential impediments to growth;

185 (5) A review and evaluation of the economic development structure  
186 in the state, including, but not limited to, (A) a review and analysis of  
187 the past and current economic, community and housing development  
188 structures, budgets and policies, efforts and responsibilities of its  
189 constituent parts in Connecticut; and (B) an analysis of the  
190 performance of the current economic, community and housing  
191 development structure, and its individual constituent parts, in meeting  
192 its statutory obligations, responsibilities and mandates and their  
193 impact on economic development and responsible growth in  
194 Connecticut;

195 (6) Establishment and articulation of a vision for Connecticut that  
196 identifies where the state should be in five, ten, fifteen and twenty  
197 years;

198 (7) Establishment of clear and measurable goals and objectives for  
199 the state and regions, to meet the short and long-term goals established  
200 under this section and provide clear steps and strategies to achieve  
201 said goals and objectives, including, but not limited to, the following:  
202 (A) The promotion of economic development and opportunity, (B) the  
203 fostering of effective transportation access and choice including the use

204 of airports and ports for economic development, (C) enhancement and  
205 protection of the environment, (D) maximization of the effective  
206 development and use of the workforce consistent with applicable state  
207 or local workforce investment strategy, (E) promotion of the use of  
208 technology in economic development, including access to high-speed  
209 telecommunications, and (F) the balance of resources through sound  
210 management of physical development;

211 (8) Prioritization of goals and objectives established under this  
212 section;

213 (9) Establishment of relevant measures that clearly identify and  
214 quantify (A) whether a goal and objective is being met at the state,  
215 regional, local and private sector level, and (B) cause and effect  
216 relationships, and provides a clear and replicable measurement  
217 methodology;

218 (10) Recommendations on how the state can best achieve goals  
219 under the strategic plan and provide cost estimates for implementation  
220 of the plan and the projected return on investment for those areas; and

221 (11) Any other responsible growth information that the  
222 commissioner deems appropriate.

223 (d) On or before July 1, 2009, and every five years thereafter, the  
224 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development shall  
225 submit an economic development strategic plan for the state to the  
226 Governor for approval. The Governor shall review and approve or  
227 disapprove such plan not more than sixty days after submission. The  
228 plan shall be effective upon approval by the Governor or sixty days  
229 after the date of submission.

230 (e) Upon approval, the commissioner shall submit the economic  
231 development strategic plan to the joint standing committees of the  
232 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce,  
233 planning and development, appropriations and the budgets of state

234 agencies and finance, revenue and bonding. Not later than thirty days  
235 after such submission, the commissioner shall post the plan on the web  
236 site of the Department of Economic and Community Development.

237 (f) The commissioner from time to time, may revise and update the  
238 strategic plan upon approval of the Governor. The commissioner shall  
239 post any such revisions on the web site of the Department of Economic  
240 and Community Development.

241 Sec. 5. Section 16a-27 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
242 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

243 (a) The secretary, after consultation with all appropriate state,  
244 regional and local agencies and other appropriate persons, shall prior  
245 to March 1, 2009, complete a revision of the existing plan and enlarge it  
246 to include, but not be limited to, policies relating to transportation,  
247 energy and air. Any revision made after May 15, 1991, shall identify  
248 the major transportation proposals, including proposals for mass  
249 transit, contained in the master transportation plan prepared pursuant  
250 to section 13b-15. Any revision made after July 1, 1995, shall take into  
251 consideration the conservation and development of greenways that  
252 have been designated by municipalities and shall recommend that  
253 state agencies coordinate their efforts to support the development of a  
254 state-wide greenways system. The Commissioner of Environmental  
255 Protection shall identify state-owned land for inclusion in the plan as  
256 potential components of a state greenways system.

257 (b) Any revision made after August 20, 2003, shall take into account  
258 (1) economic and community development needs and patterns of  
259 commerce, and (2) linkages of affordable housing objectives and land  
260 use objectives with transportation systems.

261 (c) Any revision made after March 1, 2006, shall (1) take into  
262 consideration risks associated with natural hazards, including, but not  
263 limited to, flooding, high winds and wildfires; (2) identify the potential  
264 impacts of natural hazards on infrastructure and property; and (3)

265 make recommendations for the siting of future infrastructure and  
266 property development to minimize the use of areas prone to natural  
267 hazards, including, but not limited to, flooding, high winds and  
268 wildfires.

269 (d) Any revision made after July 1, 2005, shall describe the progress  
270 towards achievement of the goals and objectives established in the  
271 previously adopted state plan of conservation and development and  
272 shall identify (1) areas where it is prudent and feasible (A) to have  
273 compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use  
274 development patterns and land reuse, and (B) to promote such  
275 development patterns and land reuse, (2) priority funding areas  
276 designated under section 16a-35c, and (3) corridor management areas  
277 on either side of a limited access highway or a rail line. In designating  
278 corridor management areas, the secretary shall make  
279 recommendations that (A) promote land use and transportation  
280 options to reduce the growth of traffic congestion; (B) connect  
281 infrastructure and other development decisions; (C) promote  
282 development that minimizes the cost of new infrastructure facilities  
283 and maximizes the use of existing infrastructure facilities; and (D)  
284 increase intermunicipal and regional cooperation.

285 (e) Any revision made after October 1, 2008, shall (1) for each policy  
286 recommended (A) assign a priority; (B) estimate funding for  
287 implementation and identify potential funding sources; (C) identify  
288 each entity responsible for implementation; and (D) establish a  
289 schedule for implementation; and (2) for each growth management  
290 principle, determine three benchmarks to measure progress in  
291 implementation of the principles, one of which shall be a financial  
292 benchmark.

293 (f) Any revision made after the effective date of this section shall  
294 take into account the state-wide comprehensive economic strategy  
295 prepared by the Commissioner of Economic and Community  
296 Development under section 32-1o, as amended by this act.

297        [(f)] (g) Thereafter on or before March first in each revision year the  
298 secretary shall complete a revision of the plan of conservation and  
299 development.

300        Sec. 6. Section 8-35a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
301 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

302        (a) At least once every ten years, each regional planning agency  
303 shall make a plan of conservation and development for its area of  
304 operation, showing its recommendations for the general use of the area  
305 including land use, housing, principal highways and freeways,  
306 bridges, airports, parks, playgrounds, recreational areas, schools,  
307 public institutions, public utilities, agriculture and such other matters  
308 as, in the opinion of the agency, will be beneficial to the area. Any  
309 regional plan so developed shall be based on studies of physical,  
310 social, economic and governmental conditions and trends and shall be  
311 designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the  
312 coordinated development of its area of operation and the general  
313 welfare and prosperity of its people. Such plan may encourage energy-  
314 efficient patterns of development, the use of solar and other renewable  
315 forms of energy, and energy conservation. Such plan shall be designed  
316 to promote abatement of the pollution of the waters and air of the  
317 region. Such plan shall include the comprehensive economic  
318 development strategies prepared under section 2 of this act by any  
319 regional economic development district in the area of operation of the  
320 agency. The regional plan shall identify areas where it is feasible and  
321 prudent (1) to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented  
322 mixed use development patterns and land reuse, and (2) to promote  
323 such development patterns and land reuse and shall note any  
324 inconsistencies with the following growth management principles: (A)  
325 Redevelopment and revitalization of regional centers and areas of  
326 mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure; (B)  
327 expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to  
328 accommodate a variety of household types and needs; (C)  
329 concentration of development around transportation nodes and along

330 major transportation corridors to support the viability of  
331 transportation options and land reuse; (D) conservation and  
332 restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical  
333 resources and traditional rural lands; (E) protection of environmental  
334 assets critical to public health and safety; and (F) integration of  
335 planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local,  
336 regional and state-wide basis. The plan of each region contiguous to  
337 Long Island Sound shall be designed to reduce hypoxia, pathogens,  
338 toxic contaminants and floatable debris in Long Island Sound.

339 (b) Before adopting the regional plan of conservation and  
340 development or any part thereof or amendment thereto the agency  
341 shall hold at least one public hearing thereon, notice of the time, place  
342 and subject of which shall be given in writing to the chief executive  
343 officer and planning commission, where one exists, of each member  
344 town, city or borough. Notice of the time, place and subject of such  
345 hearing shall be published once in a newspaper having a substantial  
346 circulation in the region. Such notices shall be given not more than  
347 twenty days or less than ten days before such hearing. At least sixty-  
348 five days before the public hearing the regional planning agency shall  
349 post the plan on the Internet web site of the agency, if any, and submit  
350 the plan to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management for  
351 findings in the form of comments and recommendations. By October 1,  
352 2011, the secretary shall establish, by regulations adopted in  
353 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, criteria for such findings  
354 which shall include procedures for a uniform review of regional plans  
355 of conservation and development to determine if a proposed regional  
356 plan of conservation and development is not inconsistent with the  
357 state plan of conservation and development and the state economic  
358 strategic plan. The regional planning agency shall note on the record  
359 any inconsistency with the state plan of conservation and development  
360 and the reasons for such inconsistency. Adoption of the plan or part  
361 thereof or amendment thereto shall be made by the affirmative vote of  
362 not less than a majority of the representatives on the agency. The plan  
363 shall be posted on the Internet web site of the agency, if any, and a

364 copy of the plan or of any amendments thereto, signed by the  
365 chairman of the agency, shall be transmitted to the chief executive  
366 officers, the town, city or borough clerks, as the case may be, and to  
367 planning commissions, if any, in member towns, cities or boroughs,  
368 and to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or his  
369 designee. The regional planning agency shall notify the Secretary of  
370 the Office of Policy and Management of any inconsistency with the  
371 state plan of conservation and development and the reasons therefor.

372 (c) The regional planning agency shall revise the plan of  
373 conservation and development not more than three years after July 1,  
374 2005.

375 (d) The regional planning agency shall assist municipalities within  
376 its region and state agencies and may assist other public and private  
377 agencies in developing and carrying out any regional plan or plans of  
378 such regional planning agency. The regional planning agency may  
379 provide administrative, management, technical or planning assistance  
380 to municipalities within its region and other public agencies under  
381 such terms as it may determine, provided, prior to entering into an  
382 agreement for assistance to any municipality or other public agency,  
383 the regional planning agency shall have adopted a policy governing  
384 such assistance. The regional planning agency may be compensated by  
385 the municipality or other public agency with which an agreement for  
386 assistance has been made for all or part of the cost of such assistance.

387 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2009*) The Commissioner of Economic  
388 and Community Development may, within available appropriations,  
389 make grants to regional economic development districts to develop,  
390 amend and implement comprehensive economic development  
391 strategies under section 2 of this act.

392 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2009*) Notwithstanding any provision  
393 of the general statutes or any public or special act, projects identified in  
394 comprehensive economic development strategies approved by the  
395 Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, the

396 Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the Assistant  
397 Secretary of the United States Department of Commerce under section  
398 3 of this act shall be eligible projects for funding from any bond funds  
399 available to the Commissioner of Economic and Community  
400 Development.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	32-1o
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	16a-27
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	8-35a
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	New section
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	New section

**Statement of Purpose:**

To promote regional economic development in the state by dividing the state into five regional economic development districts, providing for comprehensive economic development strategies for such districts and coordinating state and regional economic development planning. This will make the state eligible for additional funding from the federal Economic Development Administration.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*