



TESTIMONY

of the

CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES

to the

COMMERCE COMMITTEE

February 26, 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 this opportunity to provide testimony to you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

CCM supports Raised Senate Bill 970 "An Act Concerning Local Development Projects and Project Certification" and Committee Bill 5821 "An Act Concerning Economic Development Projects".

RB 970 would require a study to be done on -- and CB 5821 would allow -- licensed professional engineers to certify that work done on economic development projects is done in accordance with state requirements.

CCM's 2009 State Legislative Priorities includes a proposal to implement such a program.

All too often, economic development and other important projects slow down or stop due to long delays in state agencies. Some of this is unavoidable, as an inadequate number of agency staff must do extensive reviews of applications.

Modeled after the "licensed environmental professional" program established within the Department of Environmental Protection to speed brownfield remediation, this bill proposes to utilize licensed professional engineers to certify that permit requirements by state agencies have been met.

Rather than requiring that a new system of professional certification be established, we suggest that engineers already licensed by the State be allowed to do the certification. If their work is inadequate -- if they incorrectly certify compliance -- they would be in danger of losing their professional certification.

Allowing licensed professional engineers to certify projects could significantly expedite completion of local economic development projects and relieve the logjam within state agencies. It would not be a "privatization" of agency responsibility -- the agencies would still have to oversee the work of the professionals. In these tough economic times, implementing new public policy that can help these projects through the process more efficiently can reduce costs and help spur economic development.

CCM urges the committee ***favorably report*** these bills.

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If you have any questions, please contact Kachina Walsh-Weaver, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM via email kweaver@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 498-3026.