



**TESTIMONY OF JOHN SHEMO,
VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
METROHARTFORD ALLIANCE
ON RAISED SENATE BILL 888, ACC REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**COMMERCE COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 19, 2009**

Senator Le Beau, Representative Berger and members of the Committee, my name is John Shemo and I am the Vice President and Director of Economic Development for the MetroHartford Alliance. The Alliance is the City's Chamber of Commerce and the region's Economic Development Leader serving 34 municipalities.

Revised bill 888 creates a bottom-up grassroots approach to the creation of economic development strategies. The bill will substantially increase the state's access to federal economic development dollars. It will also ensure coordination of transportation, land use and economic development planning at the state, regional and local level. Further, this legislation will recognize and reward current regional efforts for economic development planning and program delivery.

Bottom line, if the state fails to recognize our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and fails to support the creation of Economic Development Districts the vast majority of our municipalities will not be eligible to submit projects for federal EDA funding. In fact, of the 34 towns in our region, only two municipalities, Hartford and East Hartford would be eligible for public works EDA funding. Only with the creation of a district can our other 32 towns be eligible for funding based on CEDS prioritized projects.

On behalf of the MetroHartford Alliance I urge your consideration of this bill.