



Joan McDonald
Commissioner



State of Connecticut
Department of Economic and
Community Development

**TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION AND
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
February 18, 2010**

*Joan McDonald, Commissioner
Department of Economic and Community Development*

**HB 5025 AN ACT CONCERNING A GREEN TECHNOLOGY, LIFE SCIENCE AND
HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY JOBS LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM**

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) offers the following information in *SUPPORT* of *HB 5025 An Act Concerning a Green Technology, Life Science and Health Information Technology Jobs Loan Forgiveness Program*.

As Connecticut positions itself for economic recovery in 2010 and beyond, it is critical that policymakers make the investments necessary to accelerate our emergence from this prolonged downturn. One important way to do that is to support a robust, highly talented workforce pool, especially in those industry sectors tied to future job growth and innovation.

HB 5025 is an investment in Connecticut's future. By providing reimbursements for educational expenses to those that have earned degrees in the green technologies, life sciences or health information technology fields and subsequently begin to pursue careers right here in Connecticut, we are sending a message -- loud and clear -- that we value their contributions and want them to be a part of our long-term success.

As many of you are aware, Connecticut leads the nation when it comes to young adults migrating out of the state. This trend has been a problem for several years now, and it needs to be stopped. As a matter of fact, it needs to be reversed, and this bill could be the catalyst for starting that reversal. This bill will encourage college graduates to stay in Connecticut. They would know that within several years of graduating, up to \$10,000 worth of their college loans would be forgiven if they simply remain in Connecticut and work in one of the above mentioned fields.

This bill also strengthens Connecticut's tradition of Yankee ingenuity. Green technology, life sciences, and health information technology are all emerging high-tech fields, which require people who are highly educated and motivated. Over the next several years, we will see a large job growth potential in these fields, and this initiative will help position Connecticut favorably in this regard.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the department's comments.