



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
COMMERCE COMMITTEE

February 25, 2010

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 House Bill 5208 "An Act Concerning Expedited Permitting for Economic Development."

CCM has long advocated requiring "economic development teams" to be established for projects with permitting requirements in multiple state agencies – namely Department of Economic and Community Development, Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Transportation.

Members have told us time and again about the delays and problems many projects experience when trying to navigate the bureaucratic permitting process through multiple state agencies. Municipal leaders and developers both have explained that the approval processes, with requirements that are either duplicative or counter to each other, can be so long that projects can founder and sometimes are abandoned.

Creating "teams" for these projects that at least include key representatives from the applicable agencies, municipality, and the developer; allowing permit applications and requirements to be processed simultaneously where applicable, with attention paid to redundant or contrary requirements; and, coordinated between agencies, will go a long way towards improving the state-local partnership for economic development and the completion of important projects. In addition, it could help rid our state of the reputation as a place where economic development projects go to die.

This bill would build on PA 09-165, which requires each regional planning organization to establish a voluntary process for applicants to state or local agencies, departments, or commissions to request a pre-application review of proposed projects of regional significance. Further, the Act requires the process to include a procedure to assure that all relevant municipalities and regional and state agencies provide the applicant with (1) preliminary comment on the project, in a form determined by the agency; (2) summaries of each agency's review process; and (3) an opportunity for the applicant to discuss the project with representatives of each relevant municipality or state agency at a meeting convened by the RPO.

CCM urges the committee to ***favorably report*** this bill.

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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) 710-9525.