Testimony of Mary Ann Hanley
Office for Workforce Competitiveness
Before the Conservation and Development Subcommittee
Appropriations Committee
February 24, 2011

Good morning Senator Harp and Representative Walker, Ranking Members and members of the Appropriations Committee and Senator Duff and Representative Hurlburt, Co-Chairs of the Conservation and Development Subcommittee. I am Mary Ann Hanley, from the Office for Workforce Competitiveness (or "OWC") and I would like to thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee.

My remarks will be brief but I would like to provide the committee with a quick overview of OWC's historical mission followed by a summary of the significant changes to the agency proposed by Governor Malloy, as outlined in his budget for the next biennium.

OWC's work over the past decade has been guided by a framework which integrates economic and workforce development principles into a single construct, which we and the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (or CETC), the federally-required state entity for education and job training policy, have promoted as **A TALENT-BASED STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH**. The strategy is grounded in the belief that Connecticut's strongest and deepest asset when it comes to economic and workforce competitiveness is its base of 21st century talent -- growing it, using it, and enriching it to the fullest extent possible -- and, importantly, tailoring it to fit the needs of Connecticut's key economic drivers and most competitive industries.

After all is said and done, Connecticut's economic growth and prosperity will ultimately derive from its STEM-competent students, skilled-workers, researchers, entrepreneurs and innovators -- its 21st TALENT POOL – and the wide-range of small tech-based companies that comprise the seed-bed for their contributions to our economy.

These small enterprises span Connecticut's entire commercial landscape including, manufacturing, biotechnology, energy, green construction, IT, healthcare, digital media and finance, to name a few. They provide the critical foundation for job growth in Connecticut and their dependency on technology and innovation is the medium for growing and attracting 21st century talent. In their roles as suppliers and contractors, they are an essential catalyst for making Connecticut's large companies more innovative and more competitive. If properly nurtured and cared for, we continue to believe that this strategy can create a self-sustaining commercial eco-system that will spawn jobs with career paths and compensation sufficient to support a family in Connecticut.

Governor Malloy's budget for the next biennium continues to support this approach and, in fact, offers new opportunities to nurture and support it. One of the key indicators of the Governor's desire to better integrate state strategies for job creation and economic development is exemplified in his call to

"Expand the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission to include economic development with its current workforce education and training focus."

This recognition that education, job training and economic development must be integrated and coordinated is central to the success of a Talent-Based Strategy for Economic Growth and is perfectly consistent with the CETC's evolution over the past ten years.

Similarly, integrating OWC into the Department of Economic Development offers a unique opportunity to implement talent-based strategies in lock-step with specific economic development pursuits, whether in the context of general policy or a specific deal. Also, our work with small tech-based companies, particularly in connecting them with our state's colleges and universities, will be a nice compliment to the good work DECD does on behalf of small business in Connecticut.

Finally, the Governor's budget introduces two new supportive tools for applying a talent-based approach to economic development in the field -- the **Jobs Training Account and the Economic Development Grant Account**. Combining heretofore disparate job-training and technology-focused programs from our agency, the CT Department of Labor and DECD into two broadly structured funding pools, these new accounts will allow for better priority-setting and the application of a strategic focus when allocating precious state resources out into the field.

It is clear to all of us that Connecticut's financial house is in a serious need of rehabilitation and that nothing less than a full coordinated effort will be required to move our state into recovery. If combining the assets of OWC with those of DECD can contribute to that fundamental imperative, we are in full agreement and stand ready to make it happen.

I would be happy to entertain any questions you might have.