

Jessie Stratton
31 Spring Street
Noank, CT 06340

March 8, 2011

Testimony to the Commerce Committee Regarding

H.B. 6526 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION AND DEVELOPMENT AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER

Good morning, Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger and members of the Commerce Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H. B. 6526. My name is Jessie Stratton and I am here this morning in my capacity as Co-Chair of Governor Malloy's Environmental Policy Transition Team Committee and a recent member of the Brownfields Task Force. That group identified three priority areas for the administration to take action this session; Brownfield, Energy Efficiency and Long Island Sound Clean Water Programs.

While the group did not attempt to write specific legislation regarding Brownfield redevelopment, we did highlight why finding a new way to promote redevelopment is so important and also made some more specific policy recommendations.

As we know, every acre of Brownfield that is remediated and redeveloped reduces the pressure to develop valuable Greenfields, thereby limiting sprawl and the negative environmental impacts that accompany it. Further, Brownfield projects are most often found in transit hubs or along established transit corridors that are often proximate to population centers. Returning these transit friendly sites to productive use can by itself contribute to the goals of transit oriented development.

The Environment Working Group specifically suggested that the new Administration establish a targeted Brownfields program with specific criteria that prioritized sites on the basis of the kind of factors outlined in H.B. 6526 and which further defined the class of parties eligible to access the resources and incentives included in the new program.

From our discussions it became clear that the single biggest disincentive to potential "white knight" developers was the uncertainty inherent in being responsible for potential off site contamination. The Alternative Brownfield Cleanup Program (ABC) enacted a couple of years ago sought to address this issue by expanding the liability protection for off-site contamination for municipalities that undertook remediation of abandoned sites. Unfortunately that program has not been used by any municipality.