



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
COMMERCE COMMITTEE
February 24, 2011

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - 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 Bill 1019 "An Act Expediting State Permitting Process."

Towns and cities are partners in governing the State. However, many state agencies take an inordinate amount of time to process and approve various permits that are necessary for routine municipal functions or local economic development projects. This results in additional fiscal and administrative costs to towns and cities, and a loss of economic development opportunities.

One way to address this problem is to assign a "municipal ombudsman" within each state agency that interacts regularly and directly with local governments to improve coordination for economic development, planning, transportation, etc.

A municipal ombudsman would be a *no-cost* way for the state to ensure that local officials (similar to legislators) can navigate the complex bureaucracies that make up our state agencies. This does not need to be a new position; rather an existing position – such as the legislative liaisons – could be tapped for filling such role.

In addition, CCM would urge you to take this proposal a step further to increase efficiencies, minimize redundancies, and reduce costs on both the state and local level.

Our 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.