

Prepared Testimony of the City of New Haven
Respectfully submitted to the Public Safety and Security Committee



City of New Haven
John DeStefano, Jr.
Mayor

RE: Committee Bill 5495: An Act Establishing a Deconstruction Permitting Process

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and members of the Committee, my name is Lil Snyder and I am the Program Manager for the City of New Haven's Small Construction Business Development Program. I urge your support for Committee Bill #5495 and the establishment of a Deconstruction Permit for the State of Connecticut with the addition of the following:

Deconstruction focuses on giving the materials within a building a "new life" once the building as a whole can no longer be used as a safe viable structure. Components within old buildings may still be valuable, sometimes more valuable than at the time the building was constructed. Deconstruction is a method that harvests what is commonly considered "waste" and reclaims it into useful building material. Recovering building materials through reuse and recycling will help Connecticut meet its 58% recycling goal by the year 2024. Connecticut's current construction and demolition recycling rate equals 7%.

When buildings reach the end of their useful life, they are typically removed through conventional demolition and hauled to landfills. In Connecticut most construction and demolition materials are not sorted for reuse or recycling, but instead are brought to volume reduction facilities and then transferred to out-of-state landfills. Building implosions or 'wrecking-ball' style demolitions are relatively inexpensive and offer a quick method of clearing sites for new structures. However, these methods can create substantial amounts of waste

Connecticut landfills accepting C&D waste have limited capacity. Many have already closed or are scheduled to close. Currently, most of the C&D waste generated in Connecticut is disposed of in out-of-state landfills.

Deconstruction is an innovative tool. What is innovative and exciting is how communities can use this process-deconstruction-to support and complement other community objectives. Deconstruction can be a link to job training and economic development efforts. It can create job training and job opportunities for unskilled and unemployed workers; also, small businesses could be created to handle the salvaged material from deconstruction projects. Further, deconstruction benefits the environment by diverting valuable resources from crowded landfills into profitable uses. In so doing, deconstruction helps pay for itself by generating revenues and reducing landfill and disposal costs.

To be effective and begin the deconstruction process in the State of Connecticut all demolition projects funded by the State of Connecticut should be directed to consider deconstruction as an alternative to demolition.

Many States already have moved to the deconstruction process; cities such as Portland, Seattle, Chicago and Boulder, have successfully implemented deconstruction and the permit approach.

While the Small Construction Business Program is preparing contractors and creating jobs in this emerging and specialized field, the next step is to revise state law. Currently, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) licenses demolition contractors, but there is nothing in the current licensing to distinguish between traditional demolition and the specialized field of deconstruction. As well as an directive to begin the deconstruction process. Your support is therefore critical to our overall effort to introduce more deconstruction activities statewide.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important environmental and economic development initiative. With your support, we look forward to integrating the highest and best practices of deconstruction into state and local procurement programs.

Respectfully submitted to the Public Safety and Security Committee, February 22, 2011.

CITY OF NEW HAVEN

Lil Snyder
Program Manager
Small Business Construction Development Program

NEW HAVEN IT ALL HAPPENS HERE