

# TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

*February 15, 2012*

*Catherine Smith, Commissioner*  
Department of Economic and Community Development

## *2012 Budget Presentation*

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Good afternoon Senator Duff, Representative Hurlburt, Senator Markley, Representative Miner and members of the committee, my name is Catherine Smith and I am the Commissioner for the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you concerning Governor Malloy's proposed mid-term budget adjustments for economic and community development.

As you are aware our mission at DECD is to develop and implement strategies to increase the state's economic competitiveness. We do this by attracting and retaining businesses and jobs, revitalizing neighborhoods and communities, ensuring quality housing, and preserving and promoting cultural and tourism assets.

Governor Malloy's proposed budget adjustments and restructuring of state government support this mission, particularly the agency's housing mandate.

Under Governor Malloy's proposal, housing programs currently administered by the Department of Social Services, the Department of Children and Families, and the Office of Policy and Management will be consolidated into DECD. Programs slated to be transferred are the Rental Assistance Program, Residences for Persons with AIDS, Emergency Shelters for the Homeless, Special Projects for Homeless Shelters, Transitional Living, Housing Meditation Services, Shelter and Services for Victims of Domestic Violence, Rent Bank, Security Deposit Guarantee Program, and the Renters Rebate Program. A new Office of Housing will be established within DECD to run these programs in addition to the housing programs already administered by the department.

The proposed consolidation will allow us to better leverage resources and strengthen our ability to address changing housing needs.

In addition, budget adjustments for DECD in the new fiscal year include reallocating more than \$2 million to fund 300 new Rental Assistance Program Vouchers; expansion of the Congregate Housing Program; as well as the addition of two positions to support our commitment to the preservation of our existing affordable housing stock.

As is the case with all other departments in the state, we have had to reduce our budget by a modest amount. While this will impact some programs, we believe we can continue to develop and deliver our mission. I therefore respectfully request the Committee's support for the Governor's proposals. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.