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Testimony to the Commerce Committee

Proposed House Bill 5074 An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for a Transit-Oriented Development Study in West Haven

Proposed House Bill 5075 An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for the Town of West Haven Train Station Pedestrian Improvements

February 28, 2012

Chairman LeBeau, Chairman Berger, and distinguished members of the Commerce Committee – thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony in support of HB 5074 and HB 5075. These bills propose to authorize bonding that will build upon the strengths and resources of the City of West Haven. Further, they support pedestrian enhancements that contribute to the overall goals of our State to promote sustainable, mixed-use community spaces.

Thanks to a much-appreciated investment by the State of Connecticut, the City of West Haven is preparing for the 2013 grand opening of its new Metro-North train station. From the beginning, the vision for the West Haven train station was to spur the overall growth of the City. City residents and leaders have long imagined the new train station as a catalyst that will promote the City's downtown district and draw more residents and visitors to the City's waterfront, restaurants, and retail and service shops. With the City's downtown district just two blocks from the site of the new station, West Haven is well-positioned to accomplish the mutual goals of improved transportation and renewed community development. HB 5074 and HB 5075 will help to move forward the City's plans to create pedestrian improvements in the train station vicinity as well as develop of a new transit-oriented plan to leverage the maximum value from the new train station.

HB 5074 proposes to authorize \$200,000 to support West Haven's strategy development process as it prepares to operate its new Metro-North station. Specifically, the City is seeking to hire an expert consultant who can guide West Haven through the process of updating its Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan to coincide with the new opportunities and realities of the train station. This project is poised to begin immediately.

HB 5075 proposes to authorize \$500,000 for improvements to pedestrian walkways and other amenities in order to facilitate convenient passage between the new train station, downtown West

Haven, Yale University's West Campus, and other major employers within walking distance. This project is poised to begin immediately.

Both of these projects will benefit the City of West Haven as well as residents throughout the state who will now enjoy easier access than ever before to the many noteworthy attractions this City has to offer. I ask the Committee to support these modest projects, which are part of a broad plan to maximize State investment in the West Haven train station.