

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE COMMERCE COMMITTEE
March 15, 2012

Catherine Smith, Commissioner
Department of Economic and Community Development

The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), as the lead state agency for developing and implementing strategies to increase the state's economic competitiveness, offers the following comments on several bills before the committee.

SB 121 – The department **opposes** this bill concerning regional economic development districts. The measures contained within SB 121 would lead to a fragmented approach to economic development, and are not necessary in a small state like Connecticut.

SB 404 – The department **opposes** this measure because DECD already serves this function, making this technical correction superfluous.

SB 405 – While supportive of the intent of the bill, DECD **opposes** creating Targeted Health Areas as outlined in SB 405. The measures contained within are burdensome and would interfere with the agency's mission of business recruitment and retention. Furthermore there is no means to evaluate the performance of the programs. The department respectfully recommends the General Assembly study different approaches to accomplish the same goals, perhaps offering tuition loan forgiveness to primary care physicians.

HB 5465 – The department **opposes** this bill concerning the state regulatory and permitting process. DECD does not have the resources or capacity to take on such an immense mandate.

HB 5466 – The department **supports** this bill concerning social enterprise businesses. Connecticut must remain competitive with other states for these types of enterprises and the jobs they create, innovations they spur, and the investment dollars they attract. HB 5466 accomplishes this by recognizing the social enterprise business model and establishing a streamlined legal framework for these organizations to follow.

Thank you for your consideration of the department's perspectives on these economic development issues.