

FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD



WATERFORD, CT 06385-2886

March 5, 2012

Senator Gary D. LeBeau
Representative Jeffery J. Berger,
Commerce Committee
Room 110 Capital Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Bill No. 123 (Expansion of Eugene O'Neill Theater Complex)

Dear Members of the Commerce Committee:

As First Selectman of the Town of Waterford, I encourage you to give your support to the funding requested to assist with the growth of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. The Theater has been located in Waterford for over 45 years and provides a college environment for students to gain theatrical experience and credits. The new expansion initiative will provide a greater growth opportunity for the facility and bring more economic growth to the area of Southeastern Connecticut. This expansion will also bring in dozens of new jobs to the area while they are doing all of the construction. This project has passed our zoning and the wetlands commissions for all approvals. The Town of Waterford has also renewed our long term lease with the O'Neill for another 60 years. We have seen a growth in the program over the years and many of the artists in the theater industry owe their success to the beginnings that occurred at the O'Neill. Our communities are visited by the students, their parents and the many visiting dignitaries that continue to work with the theater as professors, evaluators or simply associates.

The community at large gains many benefits from these visitors and residents in the form of shopping, dining and hotel stays. Waterford continues to provide the O'Neill with the property to house all of their facilities and services and we are proud to be associated with the theater for our community.

I have confidence that if funded, the O'Neill will continue to grow in their support of the Arts and provide our communities in Southeastern Connecticut with more opportunities for our businesses. We are also very proud of their successes in producing new Broadway plays that have their heritage at the O'Neill.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this valued resource.

Sincerely,

Dan Steward

First Selectman, Town of Waterford
(860) 444-5834