

TESTIMONY OF ERIC J. BROWN
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CONNECTICUT BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
before the
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
March 9, 2011

My name is Eric Brown and I serve as associate counsel with the Connecticut Business & Industry Association ("CBIA"). On behalf of our 10,000 large and small member companies throughout Connecticut, we are pleased to provide comment on:

Raised Bill No. 343, An Act Concerning Intervention in Permit Proceedings Pursuant to the Environmental Protection Act of 1971.

CBIA strongly supports this bill as a reasonable initiative to insure that the legitimate rights of individuals to participate in local and state permitting processes are preserved while at the same time, making it more difficult to abuse that right through frivolous legal action designed only to delay or scuttle otherwise legitimate projects important to the economic health of our citizen, our communities and our state.

These frivolous actions are not limited to individuals who seek to stop projects based on their own philosophy or personal interests. Businesses too have abused the rights contemplated by the drafters of CEPA in order to advance their own business interests.

This bill is not perfect and there is room for improvement. But the same must be acknowledged about CEPA. Efforts to characterize CEPA as a sacred document whereby any discussion of amending it amounts to environmental heresy should be soundly rejected.

Moving this bill forward out of committee will help drive stakeholders to a table of thoughtful and collaborative dialogue where surely improvements can be achieved without sacrificing the foundational principles of the Act.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our perspective.