



Date: February 20, 2013

To: Hon. Toni Harp, Co-Chair
Hon. Toni Walker, Co-Chair
Members of the Appropriations Committee

From: Jude Carroll, Community Development Specialist, Connecticut Housing Coalition

Re: HB 6350: An Act Concerning the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2015 and Other Provisions Related to Revenue.

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Jude Carroll; I am the Community Development Specialist at the Connecticut Housing Coalition (CHC). The Coalition represents the broad, vibrant network of community-based affordable housing activity that is happening across the state. Our more than 250 member organizations include nonprofit developers, human service agencies, resident associations, and diverse other housing practitioners and advocates. Founded in 1981, the Coalition works to expand housing opportunity and to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in Connecticut.

The Housing Coalition is concerned about several aspects of the Governor's budget bill before you today. My testimony addresses the portion that has been proposed as **HB 6357: An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Education**. This budgetary proposal would allocate \$4 million annually from the Community Investment Account for the healthy foods initiative. This allocation is out of place with a funding source that supports land-based programs. While the Housing Coalition acknowledges the importance of improving the nutrition of school-age children, the programs that are currently supported by CIA are vital for the communities in which many of these children live.

CIA funding supports local municipalities along with projects within the Departments of Agriculture, Environmental Protection, and Economic and Community Development. CIA funding is also allocated to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), an entity that has helped more than 117,000 families and individuals purchase their first home and has provided financing for the construction and/or rehabilitation of more than 29,000 units of affordable rental housing for families and the elderly. The link among all of these projects and programs is that they are land oriented—supporting Connecticut's

residents, culture and geography, factors that greatly enhance our quality of life and that are at risk of being lost with ever-increasing cuts to the state budget.

CIA funding supports open space acquisition, agriculture viability, historic preservation, the creation of affordable housing, and municipal capital improvement projects. CIA is a vital source of support for these important activities. Between its inception and 2011, CIA supported 562 projects in 145 towns and leveraged twice its investment in local dollars. Some analysts have estimated that CIA projects have created over 2,000 jobs since 2006.

CIA funds affordable housing both directly by providing “gap” financing not otherwise available and by funding important programs such as mixed-use real estate technical assistance programs such as Connecticut Main Street, rapid re-housing for households that are at-risk of homelessness, housing for veterans, and housing capital planning activities. These projects support our state’s economy and make our cities and towns more livable, attractive and vibrant.

One example is *Housing Connections*, a statewide program administered collaboratively by the Connecticut Housing Coalition and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). *Housing Connections* staff assist suburban and rural communities in the development and preservation of local affordable housing. *Housing Connections* provides an array of supports to local officials and resident groups related to planning and project development. *Housing Connections* helps local communities:

- Survey residents to calculate the town’s need for proposed housing projects;
- Create a development team to outline the details of housing proposals;
- Identify consultants to calculate project costs and put together funding proposals;
- Hire architects who can infuse a community’s vision into building plans;
- Identify organizations to coordinate projects and manage the resulting facilities;
- Develop resident application processes and selection criteria; and
- Develop project operating plans.

We urge the Committee to maintain the intent of Community Investment Account and use non-CIA dollars from the General Fund to support the healthy nutrition program.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today.