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TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE  
IN SUPPORT OF HB 5460 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MODEL PLAN FOR EMERGING  
BIOSCIENCE AND PHARMACEUTICAL BUSINESSES IN SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT  
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Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, and members of the Commerce Committee, I am here to testify in support of HB 5460.

I am a research scientist with 20 years of pharmaceutical industry experience who left Pfizer in 2011 when research was relocated to Cambridge, MA. In 2012, I received training at MIT in Entrepreneurship Development and I formed an entrepreneur network in southeastern Connecticut after surveying the community as research for the Innovation Ecosystem RFQ.

In order to build on economic resources in southeastern Connecticut such as Pfizer and on the bioscience talent and business still active in the area, I believe that there is an urgent need for southeastern Connecticut to obtain additional support in the region to coordinate access to resources, to promote entrepreneurship, and to recruit bioscience business to the region. It has been my experience and the experience of others that I have surveyed, that there is a need for a southeastern Connecticut based resource to nurture a nascent biotech industry in this part of the state. I have talked to multiple ex-Pfizer scientists with business ideas that spent months to a year trying to get out of the gate, only to give up and move. An investment should be made to create a single point of contact that should act as a clearinghouse and advise emerging business leaders on how to get started and where to go for help. This is a necessary step to leverage the unique opportunity presented in southeastern Connecticut where there is a pool of talent and potentially available infrastructure from Pfizer, which can form the seeds of a biotech cluster and link to other bioscience hubs in the state. Immediate action is required to prevent continued talent drain and the creation of an economic void in the region. In addition to supporting new ventures that emerge from the region, the office should also recruit business to the region, to can capitalize on the available talent and physical assets.

Let me tell you a story about a Connecticut based biotech startup that contacted MASSBio in January 2013. After less than a 60-minute investment, this company was enrolled in their accelerator program and is now being mentored by a panel of C-level industry experts on a weekly basis. This needs to happen here.

If action is not taken, we will lose more jobs and specialized talent. Therefore, I respectfully request the committee to support this important bill.

Sincerely, Jean Schaefer