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HB 6267 "An Act Concerning the Redevelopment of the Norwich State Hospital"

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, Committee Members good morning. My name is Bob Congdon and I am the First Selectman of the Town of Preston, home of 390 acres of the former Norwich State Hospital. Thank you for providing me this opportunity to speak in favor of HB 6267 "An Act Concerning the Redevelopment of the Norwich State Hospital". The Town of Preston has been working to remediate the environmental contamination on the site since purchasing the property from the State of Connecticut three years ago. The Town of Preston has been trying for over eighteen years to convince the State of Connecticut that remediation and redevelopment of this site was good for Connecticut's economy, creating jobs and generating tax revenues. The State has a fiduciary and moral responsibility to aid in remediation of this site – the state contaminated the site and was irresponsible in its care of the property. The State of Connecticut abandoned the property after years of neglect and mismanagement. An example of the State's mismanagement - when the State abandoned the property it shut off the heat but not the water - you can visualize the damage caused when the pipes froze. Another example, the State removed PCP containing transformers but never remediated the transformer vaults. This is all history we can not change. What we can change is to get this incredible property remediated and the redeveloped to bring jobs and tax revenue to the region and state. It is encouraging that a bill has been drafted that recognizes the importance of redevelopment of this property has on the economic revitalization of the State of Connecticut. Any help the legislature can provide the Town of Preston and City of Norwich in the advancing the redevelopment of this site is welcomed. What can the legislature do to help? Support of STEAP and Urban Act grant applications would help. Environmental clean-up funds from the Legislatuer would advance the project more than any thing else. Thank you for considering ways to advance the redevelopment of the Norwich Hospital site. Any investment by the Legislature will be a valuable investment in the State of Connecticut. Thank you.