



Department of Economic and
Community Development

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Catherine H. Smith
Commissioner

**Testimony before Commerce Committee
3/19/2013**

**RE: HB 6651: AA Implementing the Recommendations of the State of
Connecticut Brownfields Working Group.**

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, Senator Frantz, Representative Lavielle and members of the Commerce Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 6651: AA Implementing the Recommendations of the State of Connecticut Brownfields Working Group. This legislation seeks to streamline and consolidate the state's brownfield remediation programs and statutes.

The legislation before you is a culmination of many hours of hard work by many people, many of which will be presenting before you today. Though I am proud of the progress thus far, the bill is a work in progress and I look forward to working with all of you in the months ahead in order to craft a very effective piece of legislation.

Brownfields continue to be a major stumbling block for municipalities that are eagerly trying to spur economic development of these properties. This legislation seeks to simplify and streamline the brownfield remediation process and modernize the legislative language to reflect changes that we think are necessary for the program to run more effectively.

By consolidating all brownfield references within one chapter we have the opportunity to create an outline of a basic operating structure that can be easily cross referenced. This also presents us with an opportunity to clearly define a Declaration of Policy in order to assure that brownfield money finds its way to where it was intended and we can also formulate definitions that are easily referenced and understood.

Besides the technical aspects of the bill, there are some structural elements that deserve to be mentioned, all of which DECD is in full support of.

- **Section 2** establishes the Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development as well as eliminates the state funded municipal grant *pilot* program, which was never intended to become a permanent financing mechanism for brownfields. It is replaced in Section 4.



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- **Section 3** consolidates two brownfield accounts into one revolving account with the state financial system. This account will be used to fund the grant and loan program as well as serve as the depository of any loan repayments.
- **Section 4** is the Municipal Brownfields Remediation Grant Program. Language creates a single grant program by modifying the existing one in 32-9kk and eliminating the modified pilot from 32-9cc.
- **Section 5** is the Loan Program. Language seeks to clarify eligible applicants and recipients and to clearly define eligible uses of funds.

There are many other sections within this bill that are of a technical nature, but all serve one purpose, and that is to make the Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development streamlined, easy to navigate and ultimately effective in its intended purpose. I urge the committee's support of this very important piece of legislation.

Catherine Smith