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To: The Environment Committee, Connecticut General Assembly

Re: Raised Bill Number 1013 An Act Concerning Climate Change Adaptation and Data Collection

I support the bill as written, but urge that the scope of the proposed Center be expanded to encompass all aspects of climate change and adaptive response for the following reasons.

1. Climate Change does not only affect the coast; it affects the entire state, and state and municipal governments will have to address all of its impacts, not just coastal issues.
2. State government in particular and various municipal and regional governments will have to prioritize resources and define contingent plans across the entire array of climate change impacts. Funds for all actions will come out of one pot. Judgments regarding how that pot is spent must be made with equal clarity of factual basis and judgment for the shoreline and the state as a whole.
3. Issues of inland drought, flooding, erosion control, water resource and related infrastructure will have impacts on the shore-line and Long Island Sound. They must be understood as a part of the total picture.

There is one critical omission in the definition of responsibilities for this Center. The Legislature must add the requirement to study and plan for strategic retreat strategies in the event that evolving conditions render all other policy responses ineffective in certain areas. This is a highly complex and sensitive issue. It is the kind of issue that only a center such as is envisioned in this bill can effectively address. We can no longer delude ourselves that this policy option can be left off the table and swept under the rug. New Jersey and New York have come to this realization the hard way. It is time for us to borrow some of their hard earned wisdom before we too come to learn it the hard way.

In supporting this legislation, I would like to make a point that should be emphasized up front.

Connecticut is notorious for investing too little in planning. The oft heard excuse is 'we don't have the money'.

My retort to that is that we don't have the proper priorities.

Any dollar that is spent by state, municipal or private entities on infrastructure without the benefit of understanding the evolving unprecedented risks of the Climate Change phenomenon is a dollar potentially misspent. That is what we cannot afford.

If we resolve to create this center, let us also resolve to fund it appropriately to be an effective tool and not merely a symbolic good intention.

Respectfully,

Sidney F Gale

Sidney F. Gale
Biographical information

Sidney F. Gale, CPA, MBA, CGMA, conducts a consulting practice focusing on business strategy, management controls and project management.

He has served the Town of Guilford on its Economic Development, and Planning and Zoning Commissions, and chaired its Transportation Planning Committee. He has actively promoted sustainable growth strategies and strengthening of regional planning processes. He has served on the Town's Energy Task Force, and has been an advisor to its Hazard Mitigation and Pre-disaster Planning Committee on issues of climate change and transportation. During his leadership of the Town Center South Planning Committee in 2004, he convened a regional conference of municipal officials to explore the implications of Climate Change on land use policies relating to shoreline development.

Mr. Gale has given presentations on planning for the impacts of Climate Change to various civic and governmental groups in the Northeast and has testified before the Connecticut Joint Legislative Committee on the Environment regarding bills promoting methodical, science-based processes for assessing the impacts of Climate Change and developing strategies for adaptation and mitigation. He has also testified in favor of expanded integrated public transit systems for Connecticut.