
March 4, 2013

S.B. No. 840

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
State of Connecticut Legislature
Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT
finance@cga.ct.gov

Dear Honorable Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

I write to comment on S.B. No. 840 as a concerned resident of Mansfield, CT and as an interested state resident.

The espoused goals of S.B. No. 840 for increased education and attendant economic development are laudable.

However, the draft plan, raises several questions that I respectfully ask you to consider:

- UConn promises each new STEM faculty member will generate \$300K in new grant funding per year. If this promise cannot be met, does this legislative investment still make sense? This is particularly sensitive under the current federal budgetary politics, inclusive of sequestration, as federal grant funding is not protected from possible budget cuts. Also, mathematics faculty represent the 'M' in STEM and it is unusual for them to garner even \$100K, annually, in grant funding.
- How are the Next Generation CT and the Tech Park initiatives related? In particular, what would be the fate of the Tech Park without the STEM hiring initiative?
- The integration of Next Generation CT and the Tech Park requires additional water resources. What happens if those additional water resources are **not** secured? Can the expected economic development be achieved if the Tech Park stops after the initial building?
- Have the economic projections been subjected to an independent analysis as appropriate due diligence for this investment?
- Has the full environmental and economic impact been considered upon Mansfield, should Next Generation CT and the Tech Park prove as successful as promised? Specifically, what are the environmental and economic impacts of the increased traffic and population expected to be generated, with particular attention to Mansfield budget resources and local taxes?
- Will there be mechanisms for ongoing monitoring of the use of funding relative to achieving specified goals as criteria for the continuing release of funds over the multiple years requested?
- Is there danger of transforming UConn from a comprehensive university into a narrow technical college by this singular emphasis upon STEM?

A poignant cautionary reference to consider is

Science for Sale, The Perils, Rewards and Delusion of Campus Capitalism, Daniel S. Greenberg, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 2007.

A novel by the same author that presents many of the same points for a general audience is Tech Transfer, Science, Money, Love and the Ivory Tower, Daniel S. Greenberg, Kanawha Press, Washington, D. C., 2010,

where the dedication reflects the concern of this nationally renowned scientific journalist:

“To the next generation of scientists. Good luck. (You’ll need it.)”

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish any clarifications or further discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas J. Peters". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Thomas J. Peters, Ph.D.
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P.S. For full disclosure, I am a tenured faculty member at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, holding titles of Professor of Computer Science & Engineering and Professor of Mathematics.