



State of Connecticut

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Testimony in Support of HB 6042 Transportation Committee February 13, 2013

Chairmen Maynard and Guerrera, Ranking Members Boucher and Scribner, and members of the Transportation Committee, the House Republican Caucus appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 6042: *An Act Concerning a Comprehensive Plan for the Improvement of State Ports*.

This bill proposes to require the Department of Transportation to create a comprehensive plan for improvements to the state's largest ports in Bridgeport, New Haven, and New London. Ports are vital to the economic future of Connecticut. Between 70% and 75% of America's imports and exports go through its ports and this number is rising with the development of globally integrated supply chains.

Unfortunately, this development has largely bypassed Connecticut. Since 2006, export volumes have grown modestly, while import volumes have declined by nearly 80%. This decline is due to the lack of an overall system of port leadership that is committed to building a business of ports and related industries. Connecticut deep water ports are the only east coast ports without dedicated, state-level financial and institutional support. This support is necessary to create a stable investment climate for both public and private investors.

The plan proposed in this bill should identify any improvements to these ports, including, but not limited to, dredging, that are necessary to accommodate larger vessels and container traffic. Additionally, the plan should leverage water-railroad transshipment for the distribution of commodities throughout the state and southern New England. Furthermore, this plan should include the implementation of public private partnerships where necessary in order to match state investments with complementary private sector investments.

I respectfully ask the committee to give thorough consideration of this proposal as a way to improve the state's existing infrastructure in order to boost economic development. Thank you.