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TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

IN SUPPORT OF HB 5460 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MODEL PLAN FOR EMERGING BIOSCIENCE AND PHARMACEUTICAL BUSINESSES IN SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT

March 12, 2013

Members of the Commerce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Robert Frink, a resident of the Town of Groton and I am here to support HB 5460.

I am a current member of the town's Permanent School Building Committee and a past member of the Town's Economic Development Commission, the Charter Revision Commission, and the Water Pollution Control Authority. So I, like you, feel it is important to give back to the community that gave us so much.

I want to use my time today to focus on the specific requirement of HB 5460 that the model plan include "strong integration with existing regional assets."

I'd like to highlight some of those regional assets which can be summed-up as the skilled scientific and technical 'can-do' workforce of South Eastern CT. People who are currently engaged in the following;

- Designing and building the nuclear submarines that are the backbone of the United States Navy's high tech underwater fleet.
- Developing important pharmaceutical drugs, as they emerge from discovery, for success in a highly competitive market place.
- Safely operating and maintaining a nuclear power station that generates over 2000 megawatts of electric power for the region and state.
- Educating tomorrow's leaders for the United States Coast Guard. Now a worldwide force in peace and war.
- Training Naval officers and enlisted personnel in the art and science of stealth undersea warfare.

This is a rich asset base of skills. But the take-away here is that the work force in SE CT is a forward leaning 'can-do' engine that has driven the region into the future for decades, whether it's building the first nuclear powered submarine, conducting pharmaceutical research and development or educating and training personnel for national service. However in today's economy and in full view of state programs that seem to ignore the economic value of SE CT, we now need HB 5460 to continue this vital work into the future. We need HB 5460 to prevent the deterioration and dispersion of a highly productive, highly skilled workforce, not just to the detriment of the region, but to the detriment of the entire state.

Happily and constructively SE CT has obvious and well known physical assets that can be employed by the DECD to support the plan envisioned by HB 5460, for example;

- SE CT has a direct link to AMTRAK's Northeast Corridor in New London. This is an existing and vital high speed connection to nearby major national markets of scientific, entrepreneurial and financial skills and capabilities. And as a bonus, it's a green alternative to traditional highway transportation. And as an added bonus it doesn't require state funding.
- A water system that is currently underutilized. SE CT's got water, lots of water, with pipes in-place, for pharmaceutical production and other scientifically based process industries.
- Finally SE CT retains a quality of life that is family friendly, very family friendly. Families with scientific careers live and thrive in SE CT. Public and private schools are great, as they are in most of New England. What sets SE CT apart is that when you add it all up, education, opportunities for personnel enrichment, recreational resources, shoreline or country settings, easy access to big cities and general the absence of urban ills, what you have is a perfect balance of beauty and function for the 21st century. Exactly the attributes to accelerate the value of HB 5460 plan.

Thank you very much.