

Testimony of Eric W. Gjede  
Assistant Counsel, CBIA  
Before the Commerce Committee  
Hartford, CT  
February 5, 2013

**Testifying in Support of SB 801 An Act Making Manufacturing Assistance Act Funds Available For The Small Business Express Program.**

Good Afternoon Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, and members of the Commerce Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

CBIA supports SB 801 which would allow funding from the Manufacturer's Assistance Account that was previously allocated for the purpose of small business development to be used to provide additional funding to the Small Business Express program. The Department of Economic and Community Development's Small Business Express program has been a great success. To date, this program has provided financial assistance in the form of grants and loans to nearly 500 of Connecticut's small businesses. These funds have helped those businesses retain 4616 jobs and create 1738 new jobs in the state. There is still an extensive list of additional businesses hoping to receive much needed financial assistance from this program.

Additionally, we think the Small Business Express program could be even more successful if it provided a preference for small businesses that are seeking grants or loans to help with the cost of entering new foreign markets for sale of their goods and services. We hope the committee will be willing to continue that discussion with a separate bill in the coming weeks.

We urge the committee to support SB 801.