



TOWN OF GROTON

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, Members of the Joint Committee on Commerce,

We are jointly submitting testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 5574, "An act implementing the recommendations of the Southeastern Connecticut Bioscience Capabilities Assessment Report."

Groton has been proud to host Pfizer, Inc. for over 50 years, and to Electric Boat since the early 20th century, making for a long history of innovation in our town. The success of these two employers has long been the pride of Groton.

But, this is bigger than just Groton.

Downsizing at both facilities over the years has created an excess of intellectual capital in Southeastern Connecticut. We as a region need to innovate and capture these unique ideas; nurture the specialized skills that these scientists and engineers possess and find ways to encourage growth of start up companies.

To this end, there are some very promising developments in the region right now- the formation of the Southeastern Connecticut Entrepreneur's Network (SECTen) the establishment of incubator space at University of Connecticut's Avery Point campus; and the recent announcement of a partnership between CURE and UConn to found a new incubator space in a former Pfizer building.

Yes, both incubators are located in Groton, but the impact affects the region as a whole, as former Pfizer scientists, and those looking for a beautiful place to live with easy access to New York or Boston but not New York or Boston costs. People who want to live and thrive in Southeastern Connecticut.

What is clearly needed is for a group in Southeastern Connecticut to focus on entrepreneurship and bioscience, which has been recommended in reports written by both CURE and SECTen. The SECTen report states:

"Southeastern Connecticut has the infrastructure and culture to both build and to sustain high-paying biotechnology jobs within the region. What is needed is a plan to nurture these attributes, to coordinate existing economic development programs... This effort called for a unifying body that will help entrepreneurs leverage all available resources to create well-paying technical jobs, address economically distressed areas, and offset job losses as large employers, such as Pfizer, downsize. Ultimately this plan should not only offset previous job losses, but serve as an ongoing jobs-creation engine resulting in a net increase in biotech companies and jobs which will attract and retain an ever-growing pool of talent and capital into the region."

"SUBMARINE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD"



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And the CURE report agrees:

"The key to building a vibrant, entrepreneurial community is an organization that can nurture and lead the initiative, breakdown regional silos, and integrate bioscience clusters across the state...For an organization to be successful in revitalizing Southeastern Connecticut while connecting./integrating it to other bioscience clusters in the state it needs individuals savvy in the business of start-ups, fund raising, networking, marketing, and building/growing companies."

"An organization that can connect with the state, local and regional organizations that support entrepreneurs, the vision for nurturing entrepreneurship, and the commitment to cultivate cross-industry dialog and partnership will be extremely beneficial to Southeastern Connecticut efforts."

Further, we feel it is important that a representative from our region join the leadership of the Connecticut Bioscience Innovation Fund, perhaps drawing from the leadership of the Southeastern Connecticut Entrepreneur's Network group.

Southeastern Connecticut needs to retain its highly skilled employee base as it is critical for the success of the region.

We ask to you join our support for Raised Bill No. 5574.

Thank you.

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