



Waterbury Regional Chamber
driving business to business

STATEMENT OF JOHN DICARLO, PUBLIC POLICY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR of the WATERBURY REGIONAL CHAMBER before the COMMERCE COMMITTEE on H.B. 5041(RAISED) AN CONCERNING INVESTMENT IN CONNECTICUT'S ADVANCED MANUFACTURING BUSINESSES.

February 27, 2014

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone and members of Commerce Committee, I'm here today in support of House Bill 5041, An Act Concerning Investment In Connecticut's Advanced Manufacturing Businesses. The Waterbury Regional Chamber, which serves 13 towns in the Greater Waterbury region and represents the collective interests of more than 1,000 members in matters of public policy and economic development, supports this bill.

One of greater Waterbury's most prominent successes in our current economy is the manufacturing sector. The Waterbury Regional Chamber and its partners in economic development have invested considerably in helping this segment of our economy grow and thrive in recent years. The state's Advanced Manufacturing Center at Naugatuck Valley Community College and newly-opened Career Academy High School are among the most high profile of the many initiatives designed to help build upon this level of local manufacturing success.

House Bill 5041 would further our region's goals of helping this segment thrive through the creation an Advanced Manufacturing Fund that can provide grants and loans to area manufacturers to develop or modernize production equipment, support manufacturing research, training programs and more. As it would place a priority on assisting communities that are historic manufacturing hubs, we're hopeful that firms in our region would be able to capitalize on this worthy investment in our economy and job creation efforts. It would also enhance the state's ability to leverage federal and other public and private grants. In its role of helping determine state priorities in this regard, the creation of the Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Board would also represent a very positive move forward for Connecticut's economic development efforts.

The Waterbury Regional Chamber supports this legislation. However, in consultation with our manufacturing membership, we have several questions that we're hopeful can be answered as the bill moves forward. In subsection k, the legislation lists a possible voucher program to access expertise at universities and other organizations. How will these other organizations and universities be identified and will the process be approved by the Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Board?

(Continued)



Waterbury Regional Chamber
driving business to business

(Page 2)

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is not required to invest in projects of the fund, but would it be possible for the agency to invest under current programs or other initiatives that may be appropriate for a given project? Would the fund effectively serve as another tool in the state's economic development toolbox or would the fund serve as an either/or choice for companies seeking to expand or locate in CT?

Under Subsection e, DECD may establish "innovation districts" to promote agency priorities in consultation with the advisory board. Was language considered to include the advisory board's approval in this regard? Finally, we have heard Commissioner Smith reference 42 possible zones or districts. Where are these districts located and what are the criteria involved?

Thank you for your consideration. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

John DiCarlo
Public Policy and Economic Development Director
Waterbury Regional Chamber
83 Bank Street, P.O. Box 1469
Waterbury, CT 06721