



TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 6, 2015

*Norbert J. Deslauriers, Interim Executive Vice President
Connecticut Housing Finance Authority*

**HOUSE BILL NO. 6851 – AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT TRANSIT CORRIDOR
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Chairman Osten and Chairman Miller and members of the Planning and Development Committee, my name is Norbert J. Deslauriers, Interim Executive Vice President of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA). On behalf of CHFA, I am providing my *support* of **HOUSE BILL NO. 6851 – AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT TRANSIT CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**.

CHFA was created in 1969 by the State Legislature. Our purpose is to help alleviate the shortage of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families and persons in Connecticut, and when appropriate, to promote or maintain the economic development of the State through employer-assisted housing efforts.

The purpose of this legislation is to establish a quasi-public CT Transit Corridor Development Authority (TCDA) to focus on transit-oriented development projects within a half-mile radius of any transit station. TCDA will be governed by an 11-member board of directors: four appointed by the Governor, one appointed jointly by the Speaker of the House and Senate President Pro Tempore, one appointed jointly by the majority leaders of the House and Senate, and one appointed jointly by the minority leaders of the House and Senate. The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, as well as the commissioners of the departments of Transportation, Housing and Economic and Community Development or their designees will be ex-officio members with the right to vote. The chief elected official of the municipalities in which development projects occur are ex-officio, non-voting members of the board for matters affecting that project.

The creation of TCDA can support existing and future State initiatives to encourage thoughtful, compact development along the State transit lines in a way that will make the most of the State's transit infrastructure investments, encourage smart growth and economic development, and create vibrant neighborhoods around transit hubs. TCDA can provide leadership and guidance to ensure coordination and implementation of the Governor's vision for healthy communities and thoughtful Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) investments with the participation of the agencies supporting this work.

State investments and policy that encourage development along existing transit corridors have numerous positive multipliers for the State. First, these investments make the most of the State's existing infrastructure, creating value and economic development around the station while increasing ridership on the transit lines. Second, these investments encourage development in places that are, by their nature, more walkable and less car dependent, lessening our environmental impact by reducing carbon

emissions. Third, by concentrating development in these locations, less open space and farm land will be lost over time, preserving Connecticut's landscapes while creating growth and vibrancy where it belongs.

CHFA has supported affordable, mixed income and mixed use development in locations supported by transit. CHFA's Qualified Allocation Plan, through the framework of the Plan of Conservation and Development and additional location points for TOD, encourages mixed income projects located near transit because of the benefits it has to the residents of the properties. TCDA could further these objectives through coordination of State activity around the lines.

Finally, TCDA would allow not only greater collaboration and focus for State agencies, but will also create a hub for collaborating with municipalities who make the local land use decisions and will be critical to the success of TOD across the State. TCDA can help to build support, consensus and strategies for local partnerships to ensure replicable TOD models. Additionally, as a quasi-public authority, TCDA would have bonding authority that will allow it to be active in driving real estate transactions and lending to catalyze important projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments on **HOUSE BILL NO. 6851 – AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT TRANSIT CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.**