



Toni N. Harp
Mayor

City of New Haven
Office of the Economic Development Administrator
165 Church Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06510



Matthew Nemerson
Economic Development
Administrator

Transportation Sub-Committee
February 25, 2015

I'm Stephen Fontana, Deputy Director of Economic Development for the City of New Haven, and on behalf of Mayor Toni N. Harp, I wish to testify regarding **HB 6712**, AAC The Operation And Maintenance Of The Amistad.

As many of you know, the Schooner *Amistad* is an iconic state asset and treasure: it is a living symbol of one of Connecticut's best moments. Over its lifetime, it has promoted and educated people throughout the eastern United States, maritime Canadian provinces, Caribbean, and Africa about our state, its history, and its values. Unfortunately, it also has faced numerous financial and operational challenges that have jeopardized its very existence.

In response to this situation, last fall the Attorney General sought to protect the ship by seeking the appointment of a Receiver, to inventory its assets and liabilities and resolve its financial difficulties. That Receiver is now doing her work, and we expect that, in the coming months, she will submit and receive approval for a restructuring plan.

In the interim, she has formed an Advisory Committee, which includes, among other members, representatives of the Attorney General's office, Office of Policy and Management, and the City itself. That Committee is in the process of determining how best to focus the *Amistad*'s mission to create an ongoing, sustainable operation. Given that we believe strongly that the ship should remain based in New Haven, our City representatives on the Committee are active participants in that process.

In the next few weeks, we hope to share with you all, and the public, a solution for putting and keeping the *Amistad* on that sustainable path forward. We believe that the framework we create will articulate a clear rationale for supporting the ship's unique educational purpose, now and into the future.

Since we believe that we will need a legislative vehicle to implement whatever solution we ultimately develop, **we therefore respectfully request that you support HB 6712**. Thank you for your consideration.



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