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March 7, 2015

CT State Legislature Commerce Committee
State Capital Building Room 110
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Proposed Bill # 6509

An act concerning financial assistance to businesses affected by long term construction projects

Dear Members,

The East Side Partnership (ESP) is a 501c (3) established in 2002 to advocate for businesses, residents and property owners on Stamford's East Side. We are very concerned about the negative impact construction has had on local businesses, primarily small "mom & pop" shops on the East Side and are writing in support of proposed bill # 6509 which would give financial aid to businesses impacted by loss of revenue due to development or long-term construction projects. The East Side of Stamford and especially those businesses located along East Main Street and along Myrtle Avenue have been impacted negatively by simultaneous construction projects which will benefit the city, but do not benefit them directly. For the most part, these are local family-owned businesses.

The Cables Reliability Project is upgrading the capacity of the power grid to increase service in the South End, but has had a negative impact on businesses along East Main Street and North State Street. Parking meters have been removed which allowed for short term parking and shopping along East Main Street. Traffic was so backed up that many complained to us that they could not get through for delayed periods, especially during rush hours. People said they were avoiding the entire area if they could which certainly led to loss of business and even those who were travelling along East Main did not want to stop and lose their place in traffic.

The Urban Transitway Phase II along Myrtle Ave. tied up traffic on Myrtle Avenue and created a bottleneck where the street joins East Main Street. This coincided with the traffic build-up and detours due to construction on the other side of the train bridge and had a double impact on traffic flow. In addition, pedestrians had trouble negotiating the blocked sidewalks and crosswalks, so businesses lost pedestrian business, as well as, those who would in the past make a quick stop while driving by.

This prolonged construction has had a negative impact on many of the businesses in this area. At last week's East Side Neighborhood Meeting held on February 27th, many business owners and workers attended the meeting to voice their concerns about the continued construction and its negative impact on their businesses. The income loss for those with small operating margins can make the difference between a viable business and one that fails. We support this bill which supports our East Side businesses.

The East Side Partnership appreciates the efforts of Dan Fox and other legislators who are considering and supporting proposed bill # 6509.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eva Weller, Executive Director
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