



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE THEMIS KLARIDES
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

REPUBLICAN LEADER

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
300 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 4200
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700 or TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423
Themis.Klarides@housegop.ct.gov

Testimony in Support of SB 961 Commerce Committee February 24, 2014

Chairmen Hartley and Perone, Ranking Members Frantz and Camillo and Members of the Commerce Committee, the House Republican Caucus would like to thank the Committee for numerous bills dealing with brownfield redevelopment. I am here to support a House Republican Caucus proposal that we hope can be incorporated into SB 961.

Connecticut's rich history in manufacturing has left the state with a large inventory of brownfield sites scattered throughout the state. This committee has passed some great legislation in the past to provide incentives and loans to owners seeking to remediate their properties. The state's strategy has mostly been to get involved with the remediation of brownfields once a party has acquired a property and is ready to remediate it. Our proposal would have the state be more proactive and strategic in its approach to brownfield redevelopment.

The House Republican Caucus proposed HB 5984 An Act Establishing the Thousand Acres Brownfield Cleanup Campaign. The bill would require DECD to establish a program that to identify, remediate repurpose and market brownfields. The bill would authorize \$75 million per year in bonding for the program. Using a "if you clean it, they will come" approach will provide state funding for brownfield remediation in a more strategic way and provide the best return on its investment. The Office of Brownfield Remediation would be required to put together a group of business people, legislators and agency staff to identify properties to be remediated.

\$75 million a year is a lot of money. But, we view this as a total shift in the state's current approach to economic development, which includes the authorization of almost \$1.4 billion in

bonding in just four years. That money is going to companies just to relocate within the state; to retain the jobs they already have; and for the state to pay companies to build facilities.

What we're saying is to take a relatively small portion of that money and dedicate it to brownfield identification, prioritization, remediation, cleanup, and redevelopment generally. The benefits are far-reaching for the economic development, job creation, and the environment.

We understand that much of this activity is already happening; we want to do more of it and do it much faster. We are willing to provide agencies with more resources to accelerate the process. If legislative or regulatory changes are needed to speed up the process, we would definitely look at reasonable requests to do so. And, we believe that with this kind of commitment, we would attract more companies to remediate properties, and ultimately attract permanent businesses and jobs to occupy those properties.

I urge the Commerce Committee to review HB 5984 and incorporate the ideas proposed by the House Republican Caucus into any brownfield legislation. Our caucus is willing to provide any help necessary to craft legislation that will clean up our brownfield sites and provide an economic boost to our urban