

CHARTER OAK
COMMUNITIESSM

March 9, 2015

Honorable John Fonfara, Co-Chair
Honorable Jeffrey Berger, Co-Chair
Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Re: Opposition to SB 946: An Act Concerning Revenue Items to Implement the Governor's Budget

I thank Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger, and members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee for the opportunity to submit this testimony. The organization that I lead, Charter Oak Communities, is a community development corporation and public housing authority regarded for the development and operation of diverse communities in Stamford, Connecticut. We oppose the proposal in SB 946 that would reduce and then eliminate Community Investment Act (CIA) funding, moving that funding to the General Fund.

It is important to preserve the current status of CIA funding so that it may continue to perform its vital role in support of Connecticut's cities and towns. CIA funding is one of several, critically important sources of capital that facilitates needed affordable housing, community development and economic development projects in our state. Between its inception and 2011, CIA supported 894 projects in 157 towns and leveraged \$122.5 million in local and state dollars. Some analysts have estimated that CIA projects have created well over 3,000 jobs since its implementation in 2006.

Affordable housing has been acknowledged by every business group as critical to the state's ability to attract and retain employers that create jobs. CIA funds affordable housing both directly by providing "gap" financing and by funding important programs such as mixed-use real estate technical assistance programs such as Connecticut Main Street, rapid re-housing for households that are at-risk of homelessness, housing for veterans, and housing capital planning activities. These projects support our state's economy and make our cities and towns more livable, attractive and vibrant.

One example is *Housing Connections*, a statewide program administered collaboratively by the Connecticut Housing Coalition and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). *Housing Connections* staff assists suburban and rural communities in the development and preservation of local affordable housing. *Housing Connections* provides an array of

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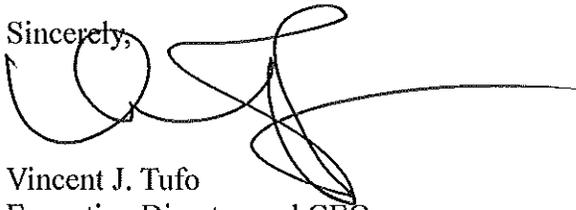
supports to local officials and resident groups related to planning and project development. *Housing Connections* has accomplished the following since 2007:

- Provided technical assistance in the development of 939 affordable housing units (271 completed, 668 being developed);
- Obtained \$46 million in development funding;
- Provided technical assistance in all eight Connecticut counties;
- Supported the development of affordable housing for families, seniors, veterans and those with special needs; and
- Leveraged significant amounts of public and private funding that would not otherwise have been available for affordable housing across the state.

Charter Oak Communities urges you to maintain the intent and funding of the Community Investment Act and to continue to support the important programs that employ Connecticut residents and create quality affordable housing across our state.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at vtufo@charteroakcommunities.org with any questions or comments. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Tufo', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Vincent J. Tufo
Executive Director and CEO
Charter Oak Communities