



TESTIMONY BY MAYOR MARCIA LECLERC, TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD

February 13, 2015

H.B. Bill No. 6259 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BOUNDARIES OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

Chairwoman Osten, Chairman Miller and the members of the Planning and Development Committee...

Good morning. My name is Marcia Leclerc and I am the Mayor of East Hartford. I am before you today to encourage your support of Proposed House Bill 6259, An Act Concerning the Boundaries of Regional Economic Development Districts.

The Town of East Hartford is a strong supporter of regionalism. As a first ring suburb of our capital city, East Hartford faces similar challenges of our urban core. We are facing climbing mill rates, increased amounts of non-taxable properties, ever-rising education budgets, and more demands on our social services. Municipalities are all facing similar issues and are searching for solutions to ease the constant stress on our limited resources and the balancing of our ever-tightening budgets. Increased regionalism and more intermunicipal cooperation to achieve savings and leverage funding, is a tool which should be encouraged.

Last year, the Capitol Region Council of Government boundaries were expanded to include 38 member municipalities. We supported this change in increasing the size of the councils of government, and the benefits associated with regionalism on issues related to transportation, public safety, federal funding, and planning.

I encourage the legislature to support Proposed House Bill 6259, which will align the boundaries of the regional economic development district with the new CRCOG boundaries subject to the approval by the legislative bodies of the towns. It is essential that we retain and strengthen our access to federal funding, specifically the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). The Town is currently using this funding to assist the rebuilding of Riverside Drive which is the main road for Goodwin College. We anticipate that the Town will continue to seek funding from EDA in the future.

This alignment of the regional districts with the new council of governments is the next logical step towards our efforts to build strong regional centers that increase our competitiveness in the global economy.

Thank you for your time today.