



**Catherine H. Smith**  
Commissioner

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMERCE COMMITTEE**  
**3/1/16**

**Re: HB 5425: AN ACT CREATING CONNECTICUT BROWNFIELD LAND BANKS**

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Senator Hartley, Representative Perone, Senator Frantz, Representative Camillo and members of the Commerce Committee. Thanks for the opportunity to testify on HB 5425.

As you are aware, our mission at the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is to develop and implement strategies to increase the state's economic competitiveness. We do this by attracting and retaining businesses and jobs, revitalizing neighborhoods and communities, and preserving and promoting cultural and tourism assets.

DECD's Brownfields programs are at the forefront of the agency's efforts to revitalize Connecticut's neighborhoods and communities. Through these programs, DECD has helped to recover scores of contaminated properties. DECD's Brownfield clean-up investments have leveraged substantial private capital and are helping to bring numerous properties back onto the tax rolls and into productive use. In an effort to further those efforts, the agency has proposed HB 5425 and urges your support for this important initiative.

Specifically, HB 5425 provides criteria for establishing a brownfield land bank in the state of Connecticut and sets out the powers, rights, and privileges of such an organization. A land bank is a specialized form of non-profit created for the express purpose of acquiring, remediating, and redeveloping brownfield sites. Under this legislation, a prospective land bank would be certified by DECD, and once certified, allowed to avail itself of certain municipal/agency powers and rights, including access to all of the state's liability relief programs and the ability to receive grants, which are presently unavailable to non-profits and developers.

House Bill 5425, which has the support of state's Brownfields Working Group, promises to be especially beneficial to smaller communities across the state. Some of Connecticut's larger communities have sufficient personnel, expertise, and resources to coordinate the clean-up of brownfield properties within their boundaries. However, smaller communities often lack such capacity. As entities dedicated to brownfield remediation that can serve multiple municipalities, the land banks created under this legislation promise to help fill that void.



Department of Economic and  
Community Development

Connecticut<sup>\*</sup>  
*still revolutionary*

Thanks for allowing me to share some thoughts on this important initiative. I appreciate, in advance, your due consideration.