

# City Of Torrington



ELINOR CARBONE  
Mayor

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## March 1, 2016 Public Hearing Testimony before the Commerce Committee

### **RE: HB 5425 - AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF CONNECTICUT BROWNFIELD LAND BANKS.**

On behalf of the City of Torrington, I am pleased to be here to **support** the legislative proposal to create Connecticut Brownfield Land Banks.

The City of Torrington is burdened by an inventory of almost one million square feet of vacant or under-utilized Brownfield sites and dozens of abandoned, blighted properties that bring down property values in the neighborhoods surrounding these sites.

Over the past two years, through aggressive grant applications, public informational opportunities and acquisition and remediation of a two-acre site strategically located along the Naugatuck River in Downtown, The City of Torrington has made brownfield redevelopment a priority.

However, as a distressed municipality with a long industrial past and a significant inventory of large brownfield sites, the City can't possibly tackle this problem alone. In addition the City has limited resources to offer property owners to assist them in remediation and redevelopment of their properties. Often, these properties become tax-delinquent.

While we are fortunate to enjoy the benefits of 100% tax collection under the only private tax collection model in the State of Connecticut, this presents challenges for the City and tax collector, who does not qualify for the privileges and immunities granted under Chapter 602. As a result, the tax collector is disinclined to foreclose on a brownfield site. In return, these properties sit vacant and underutilized, blighted properties and, often, become significant public health and safety hazards.

A Brownfield Land Bank would provide the City of Torrington another tool in our brownfield redevelopment strategy. With the intent that the purpose of these Banks is to acquire, retain, remediate and sell brownfields pursuant to agreements with the municipalities will ensure that the redevelopment of brownfield properties is consistent with the City's long-term development goals and smart growth principles. In addition, the Land Bank will provide municipalities' the greatly needed guidance and support of

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navigating through the complexities of brownfield redevelopment

HB 5425 is a common-sense proposal to assist municipalities in acquisition, remediation, education and economic development.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our support of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elinor Carbone".

Elinor Carbone  
Mayor