



Department of Economic and
Community Development

Connecticut
still revolutionary

Catherine H. Smith
Commissioner

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMERCE COMMITTEE
3/10/16

**RE: SB 398: AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF CERTAIN EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION IN
EASTERN CONNECTICUT**

Senator Hartley, Representative Perone, Senator Frantz, Representative Camillo and members of the Commerce Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to share some of our concerns with SB 398: An Act Requiring a Study of Certain Employment Transition in Eastern Connecticut.

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.

SB 398 would require DECD to conduct an analysis of the impact casino job losses have had on the workforce in eastern Connecticut and an evaluation of how to transition those former employees into jobs in other industry sectors. First and foremost, given our current budgetary constraints, we are concerned that this initiative would only further stretch the limited resources and personnel we currently have at our disposal. We also do not have the technical talent to assess these individuals and determine training needs. Finally, we are constantly engaging businesses across the state regarding their workforce needs and we already have numerous training resources to serve state residents (mostly through the Department of Labor), as well as new training programs funded out of the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund which target manufacturing – an industry in great need of skilled workers. As a result, we question the need for a formal study.

Thanks for allowing me to share some thoughts on this proposal. I appreciate, in advance, your due consideration of our concerns.