



Catherine H. Smith
Commissioner

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
3/4/16

**RE: SB 19: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT TRANSIT CORRIDOR
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY**

Senator Osten, Representative Miller, Senator Linares, Representative Aman and members of the Planning and Development Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of SB 19: An Act Establishing the Connecticut Transit Corridor Development Authority.

As you are aware, our mission at the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is 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.

In our view, SB 19 could be an important economic development tool. The bill establishes a quasi-public Transit Corridor Development Assistance Authority (TCDA) to serve as a resource for municipalities that want to advance transit-oriented development projects around the transit stations in their towns. TCDA seeks to leverage significant statewide transportation initiatives, including the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line, CTfastrak, Metro-North, and Shore Line East to help municipalities facilitate transit-oriented development. Once approached by a municipality, the authority's focus will be on working with the municipality, relevant regional organization, and appropriate state agencies – such as DECD – to concentrate housing, parking, and cultural and commercial development near transit stops, which will help to improve the quality of life and economy of the municipality. TCDA will assist municipalities on various development projects to capitalize on investment and stimulate art, culture, tourism and entertainment.

In most of DECD's programs, we proactively emphasize transit-oriented development (and other statewide priorities such as the creation of affordable housing) in evaluating competitive grant and loan applications. We believe that transit-oriented development, centered around existing and planned transit nodes, represents a great opportunity to revitalize Connecticut's cities and downtowns in a sustainable, more environmentally-friendly manner – one which also will ease congestion along our highways.

As we have seen from the Capitol Region Development Authority (CRDA), on whose board I sit, a vehicle that brings together private sector, local community leaders, and the state can be a very successful way to spur development near transit in our downtowns.



Department of Economic and
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We believe this model, in the form of the proposed TCDA, can be leveraged to support development in the cities and towns that choose to participate.

We at DECD look forward to working closely with TCDA to grow jobs and improve the livability of our communities. Thanks in advance for your consideration of this important new initiative.