



MetroHartford Alliance Statement

Connecticut General Assembly Planning and Development Committee March 11, 2016

The MetroHartford Alliance serves as the region's economic development leader and the City of Hartford's Chamber of Commerce. Our investors include businesses of all sizes, health care providers, arts and higher education institutions as well as the municipalities of North Central Connecticut. Our mission is to ensure that the region competes aggressively and successfully for jobs, capital, and talent so that it thrives as one of the country's premier places for all people to live, play, work, start and grow a business, and raise a family.

The Alliance encourages the members of the Planning and Development Committee to **support**:

- **H.B. 5601 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE AND A STUDY OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCIES**
- **H.B. 5602 - AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONALISM**
- **H.B. 5603 - AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY**
- **H.B. 5604 - AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL EFFICIENCIES**

The MetroHartford Alliance has long been an advocate for regional cooperation and strongly believes that our communities can serve taxpayers more efficiently and effectively by working together. Given the budgetary challenges that the state and municipalities are facing, it is critical that we develop avenues for our cities and towns to share services in order to reduce costs. Under the leadership of Speaker of the House Sharkey and others, the MORE Commission has served as an incubator for innovative policies focused crafting solutions that help our communities grow and thrive through collaboration. We applaud these efforts and the goals of the legislation above.

The Alliance encourages the members of the Planning and Development Committee to **oppose**:

- **S.B. No. 331 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING A HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM**
- **S.B. No. 422 - AN ACT CONCERNING RESIDENTIAL WATER RATES, PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SUPPLY EMERGENCIES AND SELLERS OF BOTTLED WATER**

S.B. 331 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING A HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM. The MetroHartford Alliance recognizes the vital importance of quality broadband internet service to the residents and employers of our state. Connecticut is fortunate to be able to offer industry-leading broadband speed to the state's employers and residents. This infrastructure, vital to Connecticut's economic competitiveness, is the result of hundreds of millions of dollars in investment by private sector providers and the hard work of the thousands of Connecticut residents that they employ. These businesses and their employees pay taxes and invest their dollars in our communities. Additionally, these providers develop the innovations in speed and access that are critical to our state's economy and technology community. Rather than spending millions of taxpayer dollars launching a broadband service that would threaten Connecticut residents' jobs, the state should instead treat

private providers as the partners best positioned to lead efforts to build upon Connecticut's solid foundation of broadband access and speed.

Connecticut's private sector employers – including those in the broadband/telecom industry - generate the jobs and taxes that fund our state's core government services; policies enacted by the legislature factor significantly in the decision making of these employers. Legislation that that will harm our state's employers' ability to compete and succeed should be rejected by anyone committed to creating jobs in Connecticut.

S.B. 422 - AN ACT CONCERNING RESIDENTIAL WATER RATES, PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SUPPLY EMERGENCIES AND SELLERS OF BOTTLED WATER. The mission of the Alliance is to help our region compete successfully for jobs, capital, and talent. We take our mandate to advocate for economic development and job growth very seriously, and work hard to promote our region and its strategic assets, including workforce, quality of life and infrastructure to current as well as prospective employers. One component of infrastructure critical to economic growth from which the metro Hartford region benefits is abundant potable water. We are concerned that S.B. 422 will effectively negate this strategic asset. Data clearly shows that the Metropolitan District Commission has more than sufficient capacity to meet the needs of commercial and residential customers in an environmentally responsible manner. This legislation seeks to impact the planned development of the Niagara Bottling facility in Bloomfield, Connecticut. Another impact of S.B. 422 - intended or otherwise - will be to send a signal to other commercial water users: do not come to or expand in Connecticut.

Connecticut is faced with a budget shortfall of as much as \$266 million in the current fiscal year, a nearly \$900 million deficit in FY 2016-17, and projected deficits in excess of \$2 billion in both FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19. As our state struggles with massive budget deficits and anemic economic growth, it is critical that we have the capacity and the desire to support private sector employers' expansion in and relocation to Connecticut.

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