

February 29, 2016

Electronic Testimony Against Governor's S.B. No. 19 An Act Establishing the Transit Corridor Development Assistance Authority - Submitted by Patricia Bollettieri, West Haven CT

Dear Members of the Planning and Development Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. If guidance for economic development is desired, it should come from the citizens and local officials of the target municipality rather than from a remote and removed agency, since those close to the source are always more knowledgeable. Sometimes it may be necessary to coordinate the plans of multiple municipalities, but this can be done by one of the statewide or regional boards which already exist. Please don't add yet another bureaucracy to our already overloaded, top-heavy mix. Let development occur naturally, bottom up, based on the laws of supply and demand.

Our government in Connecticut is already too big, and in light of our current budget situation we should not consider staffing another bureau. In addition, there is no analysis which compares the cost of this body with the benefits it is supposed to generate.

Although S.B. 19 does not currently authorize Eminent Domain for private-to-private takings, it lays the groundwork to add this feature at a later date. Existing Connecticut state law can be used to bulldoze citizens out of their homes in private-to-private, 'economic development' takings. The current system of state-financed Municipal Development Plans (MDP) is a sham, as these plans only require the regurgitation of boilerplate language from state statutes to be deemed valid. Meanwhile, long-time residents and family businesses which have been in operation for generations are forced out. In an ironic and cruel twist, taxpayers finance their own demise by funding MDP grants with taxpayer dollars. As S.B. 19 is a direct descendant of statutes which promote this line of thinking, I am fearful that this new bureaucracy will evolve into another instrument of government tyranny.

We don't need a new bureaucracy-we need fewer bureaucracies. Please advise Governor Malloy accordingly. Rather than create this bureau, the State of Connecticut should dismantle departments that add little or no value to our daily lives. In this way we can solve our existing budget crisis while preserving programs which add value.

To summarize why I am against this bill:

1. It creates another government bureaucracy of appointees which will be expensive to run, without quantifying any valuable benefits;
2. It undermines the role of the marketplace and local citizenry in driving natural economic development;
3. It is a redundant agency, since municipal commissions and already-existing state agencies are available to fulfill the proposed functions;
4. It sets the stage for Eminent Domain abuses in the future, should SB19 ever be amended or expanded to authorize Eminent Domain takings for private rather than public uses.