



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE PROPERTIES REVIEW BOARD
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 202
Hartford, Connecticut 06103



EDWIN S. GREENBERG, CHAIRMAN
BRUCE JOSEPHY, VICE CHAIRMAN
JOHN P. VALENGAVICH, SECRETARY
JACK HALPERT, MEMBER
JEFFREY BERGER, MEMBER
WILLIAM CIANCI, MEMBER

DIMPLE DESAI, DIRECTOR
TEL: (860) 713-6400

TO: Honorable Members of the Transportation Committee - **Raised H.B. No. 6484**

My name is Jeffrey Berger, and I am a State Properties Review Board (hereinafter “Board”) member. I am accompanied by the Board Director, Dimple Desai and his staff, Thomas Jerram. On behalf of Mr. Greenberg, the Board Chairman, and the Board members, I am here to express Board’s opposition to increasing the \$ threshold under the Raised H.B. No. 6484. One of the purposes of this bill is to increase the \$ threshold of the proposals submitted to the Board for review and approval from five thousand dollars to ten thousand dollars under Subsection (h) of Section 13a-73.

Currently, the Board reviews the Department of Transportation’s (hereinafter “Department”) acquisitions and administrative settlements exceeding five thousand dollars.

The Legislature established this bi-partisan independent Board in 1975 as a watchdog entity to ensure that the State’s real estate acquisitions and leases would be in the State’s best interest and free from “political patronage, cronyism, personal spoils systems, and friendship.” *See* Final Report of the Sub-Committee on Leasing, Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations, January 7, 1975.

The Board opposes H.B. No. 6484 for the following reasons:

- The Board provides an independent oversight of the proposals from the Department as the legislature had intended.
- For example, starting 2017 till to date, the Board has reviewed about 62 proposals that had the value between \$5,001 and \$10,000.
- The average review time taken by the Board per proposal for this timeframe was about less than **30 calendar days**.
- For about dozen proposals, the Board sought clarification from the Department to make sure that the costs and the methods used were appropriate.
- As far as the Department's statistics are concerned:
 - For the same time frame, the average time taken by the Department from project initiation to submission to the Board was **more than 100 days**.
 - Therefore, the impact of the Board review time is negligible compared to the timeframe the Department takes in processing and getting other approvals.
- Also, there should not be any fiscal impacts to the Department as it currently submits proposals for the Board review.
- The Board's review is very critical during these difficult fiscal times. It is the goal of the Board to provide an oversight, accountability, transparency, and uniformity by reviewing proposals from the Department receiving state tax payers' funds as directed by the Legislature.

For the above cited reasons, the Board opposes the change in the threshold under Section 13a-73(h).

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide the testimony on this raised bill.