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Testimony of Deputy Secretary Kosta Diamantis

Education Committee

March 17, 2021

House Bill 6617

Good morning Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty and distinguished members of the Education Committee.

My name is Kosta Diamantis and I am the Deputy Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the Director of the Office of School Construction Grants, Review and Audit. I am joined by members of my team in the Office of School Construction Grants and Review.

Section 1 of [House Bill 6617](#), **An Act Concerning Authorization of State Grant Commitments for School Building Projects and Revisions to the School Building Projects Statutes**, is the proposed school construction Priority List projects for this year, reviewed by the Department of Administrative Services and approved by the School Construction Priority List Review Committee. It consists of fifteen school construction projects, including ten elementary schools, a middle school, three high schools and one special education school. Of the 15, five are new school projects, six are renovation projects, two are categorized as "Extension/Alteration projects," one is for special education and one is for vo-ag equipment. I would note that the Office of School Construction Grants, Review and Audit is recommending that vo-ag equipment be classified as non-priority projects this session, going forward, in order to facilitate faster approval of these projects.

This proposed Priority List has estimated total project costs of \$637,710,083. If the legislature and Governor approve of House Bill 6617, that would set the State's maximum grant amount for these projects at \$392,874,668. In addition, there is one reauthorization with estimated project costs of \$112,329,500 and a potential grant change of \$32,381,067.

Just as in the past, I would note that this maximum total grant amount is the upper limit on state grant support for these school construction projects. The Office of School Construction Grants, Review and Audit conducts extensive review of the school construction projects. Preliminary meetings are often held before grant applications are submitted, enabling us to present you with the true cost of project construction work. We will continue to work with the school districts who have proposed projects on this Priority List. Those additional reviews may lead to reduced total project costs and grant commitments, so the true cost may be lower than the authorized maximum amount.

We look forward to working with you on our continuing work of delivering modern school facilities that support the high quality of education that Connecticut's children need in a cost-effective manner.

Thank you very much. I now would be happy to answer any questions.