

# Commerce Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-1042

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS

**Title:** TO CONNECTICUT BROWNFIELD LAND BANKS.

**Vote Date:** 3/9/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 2/23/2023

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Commerce Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Due to the struggles many Connecticut brownfield land banks experienced due to the pandemic; they did not have adequate funding to redevelop valuable land throughout the state. Through the addition of capacity building grants awarded by the DECD, these land banks would be better equipped to repurpose land that would not only spur economic development but revitalize the environment as well.

## **Substitute Language-LCO 5402:**

Added that qualified land banks must be entered into at least one land banking agreement with at least two municipalities that are parties to that agreement to receive a building grant, and that any grant awarded cannot exceed fifty thousand dollars.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Alexandra Daum, Commissioner, DECD**

The DECD **opposes** this bill. DECD Commissioner states there is already a consideration in current regulations that certify BLB's have staff adequately provided for to initially qualify as a BLB. Ms. Daum states that there already exists a 5% administrative expense billable allowance in existing grants and is curious if this new bill would affect access and inclusion of these funds. She also provides that this bill could dilute the available funding by creating a greater demand for existing funding.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Wayne Bugden, President, Eastern CT Land Bank Inc.**

The Eastern CT Land Bank **supports** this bill. Mr. Bugden believes that there is potential in HB 1042 to aid the realization of CT communities with remediating brown fields provided sufficient funding. He states the timing is fortunate as well with its coordination with the 2021 Federal Infrastructure and Jobs act. There is currently more need than funds and this bill would help with hiring staff to organize and take full advantage of these awards.

### **John Burt, Town Manager, Town of Groton**

Mr. Burt **supports** this bill. Mr. Burt states these funds and their disbursement clearly falls within the scope of DECD. HB 1042 if passed will provide CT with additional tools to aide economic development throughout the state.

### **Mary Ann Chinatti, Former President, Eastern Connecticut Land Bank**

The Eastern Connecticut Land Bank **supports** this bill. Ms. Chinatti states positive action on this bill will show our commitment to public and private partnership between CT state and brownfield land banks to encourage environmental revitalization. This bill would aide in meeting the important need of funding to provide for administrative staff.

### **Michael Passero, Mayor, City of New London**

Mr. Passero **supports** this bill. States that brownfield remediation has many unknowns including the extent of their associated costs to bring the project to completion. PA19-175 left out small startup landbanks by not aiding with administrative costs prior to the new landbank becoming self-sustaining. Passage of this bill will help with the managing of Brownfield remediation.

### **Chris Edge, Economic Development Director, Town of Berlin**

Mr. Edge **supports** this bill. Highlights the importance of funding assistance to take some of the economic uncertainty in brownfield remediation out of the initial process, specifically citing help with environmental testing fees and possible owed back taxes. Believes that this bill will help make the most challenging brownfields in Ct more attractive for important and necessary rehabilitation.

### **Norman Seney, Mayor, Town of Putnam**

Mr. Seney **supports** this bill. Believes that this funding makes positive changes in the Town of Putnam by helping to remediate and revitalize brownfields.

### **Alan Neigher, Board Member, The Klein Memorial Foundation**

The Klein Memorial Foundation **supports** this bill. The state assistance they received during the pandemic was crucial to keeping their organization open and functional. Without state

assistance through legislation such as SB-1042, the Klein memorial would face significant challenges to continue its role as a historic arts venue in the community of Bridgeport.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

**Reported by: Colin DeCure**

**Date: 3/21/2023**