

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

SA 14-12

HB5368

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2014**

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Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Do you have any other announcements or introductions? Are there any other announcements or introductions?

If not, let us return to the calendar and begin our week's business.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 132.

THE CLERK:

On page 5, Calendar 132, favorable report of the joint standing committee on Planning and Development. Substitute House Bill Number 5368, AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE POINT STRATFORD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT WITHIN THE TOWN OF STRATFORD.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The distinguished chairman of the Planning and Development Committee, Representative Rojas.

REP. ROJAS (9th):

Well good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good afternoon, sir.

REP. ROJAS (9th):

Good. I move acceptance of the joint committee's

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favorable report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Question is on acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

Will you remark, sir?

REP. ROJAS (9th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What the bill does is allow for the creation of an infrastructure improvement district to help address the long vacant 77 acre Stratford Army engine plant so that it can be redeveloped into a mixed use development project.

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk is in possession of an Amendment, LCO 4403. I ask that the Clerk call the Amendment and I be granted leave of the Chamber to summarize.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 4403 which will be designated House Amendment "A."

THE CLERK:

Yes. LCO Number 4403, designated House Amendment "A" and offered by Representatives Hoydick, Backer, Rojas and Senator Kelly.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Gentleman has sought leave of the Chamber to summarize. Is there objection?

Seeing none, you may proceed with summarization, sir.

REP. ROJAS (9th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What the amendment does is make one exception for one of our statutes that would require Legislative approval for certain expenditures of money that might be given out by DECD to continue with the remediation of the project. I move adoption.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Question before the Chamber is adoption of House Amendment "A."

The distinguished ranking member of the Planning and Development Committee, Representative Aman.

REP. AMAN (14th):

Yes, I would urge my colleagues to support this amendment. It does -- what we're doing by the amendment is allowing them to use these funds. Normally it would have to come back and do a separate bill. I think it is the intention of the General Assembly to go forward with this project and therefore I would support the amendment and the bill as amended.

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Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to
remark further on House Amendment "A"?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in
favor of House Amendment "A," please signify by saying
aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. The amendment is adopted.

Would you care to remark further on the bill as
amended?

Representative Terry Backer of the 121st.

REP. BACKER (121st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to urge the Chamber to pass this bill
today. It's a good -- like we used to say, it's a
good bill and ought to pass. It has no impact on the
state budget, it has no fiscal note. But as pointed
out, there's nearly 80 acres of old industrial land,
the remnants of our industrial past that have laid

fallow for nearly 20 years. A million and a half square feet of building that is essentially not useful in this era.

After many false starts, the army and the town have finally found a developer and we have brought this bill forward to help with the infrastructure improvements that connect the development -- the mixed use development, which would be housing and retail, to the system of infrastructure that exists in the immediate area.

This is a key part of the redevelopment efforts in Stratford to help us add to the grand list and ease the burden on the taxpayers and I ask the support of the Chamber on this bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Would you care to remark further on the bill as amended?

Representative Hoydick.

REP. HOYDICK (120th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is Stratford day today, this morning in the chamber. I echo the sentiments of my colleague, Representative Backer, and on behalf of Representative

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Miller and myself, we truly support this amendment as well as the underlying bill. And of the 77 acres along the Housatonic River, there is proposed 1,500 housing units as well as 500 square feet in retail.

The existing plant, the industrial plant is 1.5 million square feet that is brown field and needs remediation. And with cooperation from the City of Bridgeport, the State of Connecticut and the Town of Stratford, we have worked on the adjoining airport. Now this is the next step in the puzzle.

And I'd also like to commend our own DEEP, Department of Energy Environmental Protection, Deputy Commissioner Macky McCleary, Commissioner Dan Esty and Commissioner Rob Klee for their hard work with the army to remediate and come to standards about those mud flats in the Housatonic River.

As Representative Backer said, this has been laying fallow for 20 years. The contamination has been there for more than that and we are finally able to clean up that waterway. So I urge my colleagues support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Madam.

Would you care to remark further on the bill as

amended?

Representative Kokoruda.

REP. KOKORUDA (101st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand in support of this bill as amended. This indeed is Stratford day today. I actually grew up in Stratford and this land we're talking about is the gateway to a wonderful, wonderful small beach community called Lordship. And you know, my family still lives there. I drive by and look at this every time I visit which I'm assured is not enough, but every time I visit and I just want to commend the people that put this together.

It's a long time coming. It is such an important thing for Stratford. It's exceptionally important for Lordship and I want to thank everybody and urge everyone to support this bill as amended. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Madam.

Would you care to remark? Would you care to remark further on the bill as amended?

If not, staff and guests to the well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be

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open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Will members please return to the chamber immediately?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Members please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast.

If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Yes, Speaker. House Bill 5368, as amended by House "A."

Total number voting	139
Necessary for passage	70
Those voting Yea	139
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	12

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill as amended passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 310?

THE CLERK:

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Calendar 416, House Bill 5407.

Calendar page 18, Calendar 490, House Bill 5113.

And back on Favorable Reports, Calendar page 6, Calendar 331, House Bill 5248. We might pause for a moment to stand at ease just to verify those items, see if there are any corrections before we ask the Clerk to read the items and move to a Consent Calendar vote.

THE CHAIR:

We will stand at ease, sir.

(Chamber at ease).

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President. Just for purposes of clarification, Madam President, on that item from the last evening's Consent Calendar to be --

HB 5380

THE CHAIR:

Reconsider.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Be removed. Obviously I move to reconsider. I think we need a vote on the motion to reconsider.

THE CHAIR:

I will try a voice vote then. All those in favor of reconsidering please say Aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

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And on page 22 Calendar 513, House Bill 5353.
Calendar 515, House Bill 5361.

And on page 24, Calendar 526, House Bill 5556.
Calendar 524, House Bill 5219.

Page 25, Calendar 4 -- sorry, Calendar 530, House Bill 5368,
page 27, Calendar 546, House Bill 5061.
Calendar 543, House Bill 5037.

On page 28, Calendar 550, House Bill 5514.

Page 29, Calendar 554, House Bill 5148.

Page 30, Calendar 563, House Bill 5554.

Page 31, Calendar 567, House Bill 5229. Calendar 565,
House Bill 5028.

And on page 42, Calendar 384, Senate Bill 442.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney, do you have any more good news for us?

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, thank you, Madam President. One additional item
to add before we call for the actual vote on the
Consent Calendar, and that is item an Calendar page
33, Calendar 575, House Bill 5359. With that one
addition it would call for a vote on the Consent
Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please call for a vote on the Consent
Calendar, and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.
Immediate roll call on the second Consent Calendar
today has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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If all members have voted? All membered voted, the machine will be closed. Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

On the second Consent Calendar for today.

Total number voting	35
Those voting Yea	35
Those voting Nay	0
Absent not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar passes. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President. If the Clerk would call the first item marked go to follow the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 33, Calendar 579, Substitute for House Bill Number 5348, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT OF DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES. Favorable Report of the Committee on Planning and Development.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY:

Thank you. Thank you, Madam President. Pursuant to Rule 15 of the Joint Rules, I am recusing myself from consideration of this bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir. Please leave the Chamber.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**PLANNING
AND
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COMMITTEE

March 7, 2014
11:00 A.M.

CHAIRMEN: Senator Osten
Representative Rojas

MEMBERS PRESENT:
SENATORS:

Fasano

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aman, Belsito,
Candelora, Davis,
Diminico, Flexer,
Fritz, Fox, Gentile,
Grogins, Kokoruda,
Reed, Ritter, Sear,
Simanski, Vicino

SENATOR OSTEN: Good morning. How is everybody today? We'll start the public hearing for Planning and Development and the first person on the agenda is Representative Backer.

Thank you.

REP. BACKER: (Inaudible) good to see everybody, Chairman Rojas and Chairwoman Osten and -- and members of the Committee. I'm here to testify in favor of H.B. 5368. This act would create a special taxing zone -- taxing district for a -- the site of the former Stratford Army Engine Plant which was owned by the United States government and over time has laid fallow. Seventy-eight acres and estimates between a million and a million and a half square feet of buildings.

It was always my hope that we could get some industry back in there but the -- no industry seems to be interested in moving in the buildings that are energy hogs both for lighting and heat and to bring heavy industry back into the southern part of the state.

So I'm here to support the bill to create the special taxing district which would have no impact on the state budget. It would create a development there we sorely need. We just have all these old buildings and brownfields there.

It's over -- over 4,000 feet along the Housatonic River and on Main Street in Stratford and, in my estimation, it's about time we did something with this property and this bill would give them a leg up moving forward to develop it.

And why I say it's neutral on the state budget, I -- I want to correct myself. Because of the intensive large-scale development and the mixed use nature of the property, there would be -- it's heavy on housing, senior housing, higher -- higher values than senior housing and mixed use such as stores, shops, things of that nature, that all of those would generate taxes for the state.

So I say it's a -- has no negative impact or neutral impact. It may actually have somewhat of a positive impact. It certainly would have a positive impact on the Town of Stratford.

Now there are five other municipalities that enjoy the special taxing district classification in the state. We would hope that Stratford would -- would get it. Most of our town is developed. After the heavy industry left, a lot of residential development went on. There's very little property, very little area that can be developed into commercial or industrial or -- or mixed use -- mixed use.

So this 78 acres of property is a -- a prime

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piece of property to see this type of development. It's not far from my house either. So I would urge the Committee to support it in the fact that it doesn't harm the state.

It may help generate some tax income from the state through employment and purchasing and it would create a -- remove a -- an eyesore that sat there for 20 years that is a brownfield and we now have the possibility of getting it cleaned up.

The Army has -- I want to be careful saying the term reneged on cleaning it up because they are I believe committed to doing the waterside cleanup but there are -- many other discrete areas across the area that would have to be cleaned up and would get cleaned up and with this special tax incentive would -- would expedite that.

So just keeping it short, I'll stop my talking and if there's any questions that I can answer I will.

SENATOR OSTEN: Are there any questions?

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO: Representative Backer, it's good to see you.

REP. BACKER: Good to be seen, thank you.

SENATOR FASANO: So basically this is to allow the redevelopment and allow the town to put together money so they could do something more economically advantage for the Town of Stratford, fair to say?

REP. BACKER: Oh yes I think it would be an economic advantage to the Town of Stratford once the (inaudible) developed it. Certainly would -- right now the property has a -- an almost zero value to the town. It belongs to the United States government. Well -- or has for a long time so it paid no taxes to the town. So -- but as a special taxing district, I'm not familiar with how those things work out.

The Town of Stratford would not lose its autonomy on this. It would be able to continue, you know, with its zoning and input into the development. I've seen some drawings of the development and it does border the Housatonic River which is the main feature in Stratford and the Housatonic River there, I think it's 4,500 feet of shorefront, it would connect -- allow it to connect the greenway that stops at either end of this polluted property at this point and would connect it to the recreational -- town-owned recreational facilities at Short Beach.

It's an optimal place for this type of development and as I said Stratford is densely developed and has very few places left to develop on this scale.

SENATOR FASANO: One of the things on your language that you submitted the -- the only one change we did there was a number that was plugged in to your original bill. I can't remember how much it was and what we did was rather than applying that number, we, you know, let the town and you guys decide what number you may want to do as opposed to us saying, you know, up to this amount. You may want more. You may want to do less so we removed that number.

I just wanted to -- I think -- I think we felt

it was a good change but I -- we just wanted to let you know that that's one change we made and with all the language that's in here may not come readily apparent that's what we did. So I just draw that attention.

REP. BACKER: Well I know -- I know you guys ask the questions here but I'm curious as -- does it reflect a -- something that would allow for movement on the -- on the -- behalf of the town and what it might chose to do rather than getting stuck with a fixed number in a bill?

SENATOR FASANO: Right, right. It was to allow you to seek the number that you felt best served the purpose as opposed to being restricted to a number because if for some reason you wanted to exceed that number, you'd have to come back, you know, come back here and ask us to change things and, you know, we move at such record pace, you know, that you may have to wait for awhile.

So we just took it out and then it's totally local. You guys make your own calls on that.

REP. BACKER: Okay well I -- I believe that finishes my testimony. I believe this is a solid plus to an old town that used to have a lot of industry in it. We still host Sikorsky but you may have seen recently that Sikorsky is talking about layoffs numbering over 600. With the federal sequester on military spending, who knows what is going to happen. So we need to -- desperately need to redevelop those areas that for the last 20 years no one's had any great interest in.

Thank you all very much for your attention and your time.

SENATOR OSTEN: Are there any other -- wait just one minute.

Are there any other questions from anybody?
No?

Thank you very much, Representative Backer, for coming.

REP. BACKER: Okay, thank you.

SENATOR OSTEN: Appreciate it.

Senator Kelly. Good morning.

SB 266
SENATOR KELLY: Good morning, Senator Osten, Representative Rojas, Senator Fasano and members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Kevin Kelly. I'm State Senator for the 21st District which includes Stratford, Shelton, Monroe and Seymour. I happen to reside in Stratford in the section -- I drive by this -- this vacant plant every day.

I'd like to talk about House Bill 5368 regarding the growth, development and impact that it will have, not only on Stratford, but the surrounding Connecticut communities that are nearby to Stratford. This legislation will establish a special tax district across 78 acres in South Stratford inclusive of the dormant Stratford Army Engine Plant.

This is the first step in launching an expansive project to breathe new life into the community, create new jobs and provided much needed tax relief for the citizens of Stratford. Currently the Army Engine Plant is contaminated, inoperative brownfield. The area surrounding the plant has been vacant and unused for far too long.

This project will enable us to transform the space into a place of action and growth. Many have advocated for this redevelopment for decades and it is finally time to move forward. The Stratford delegation is united in our support of this venture. We envision an entirely new mixed use redevelopment -- revitalization project including space for both commercial and residential development.

Restaurants, shops, offices, new homes will rejuvenate a transformed waterfront. The mixed use space will allow for a variety of business opportunities, maximizing the potential on the local economy and we will establish a new community that will bring opportunities to countless Connecticut families and spark job growth for years to come.

Unemployment in our state is a serious problem that impacts thousands of families. According to data from the Labor Department, Connecticut has had a negative job growth over the past 25 years and 23,000 fewer residents are employed today than when I first came to the Capitol in January of 2011.

In addition to the statewide job problem, Sikorsky recently announced the layoff of over 600 employees with the majority of those individuals working here in Connecticut. These numbers are daunting, especially for the people of Stratford, but solutions are in sight.

The Point Stratford Redevelopment Project is crucial to rejuvenating the community and paving a road towards job creation for our local families.

Legislation to create the Point Stratford Tax

District will give Stratford the tools we need to seek appropriate financing for significant infrastructure development. It is the first and most crucial step in bringing our visions to fruition.

Once we address this first hurdle, I look forward to a comprehensive planning and vetting process during which experts in all fields will be encouraged to share their input and help guide us in respectful and smart redevelopment.

The people of Stratford have waited a very long time to move forward with this plan and we are all dedicated to make sure this project is done right. The plans are based on previous special acts which authorize the creation of improvement districts in Stamford, Bridgeport, Windsor, Southington and East Hartford leading to a significant community transformation.

Similar to these projects, Point Stratford Redevelopment will create exciting opportunities for not only our local community but also for our region and the entire state. It is imperative that the state support this crucial first step for Stratford and, for that reason, you know I've come here today.

I know that Senator Fasano asked the question with regards to the number. I believe the number was originally about 100 million and I know I've talked with Senator Ayala on this point and he agreed with the removal and we all -- we -- we spoke with Mayor Harkins in Stratford who also thought that that revision was a smart way to go so that we don't have to come back to the Legislature at that point.

I also just want to let you know that I support Senate Bill 266 with tax relief for our

veterans who serve overseas and that they should be treated equally as due -- regardless of where they are, not just those that are in Iraq and Afghanistan but I really want to focus any questions or comments on the Stratford project.

SENATOR OSTEN: Are there any questions?

Yes, Representative.

REP. KOKORUDA: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I just want to say, Senator, as you know that is my hometown and I've driven by that location -- well I don't know how long it's been closed. Do you know how long it's been closed?

HB 5368

SENATOR KELLY: It was closed in 1996 as part of the peace dividend.

REP. KOKORUDA: And I think parts of it closed even before that.

SENATOR KELLY: Yes.

REP. KOKORUDA: And I'll tell you -- you have to understand this borders Long Island Sound some of this property, at least part of it as you drive down there. It's also just a couple of miles from downtown Stratford and a whole section of Stratford's community has -- at one point was very -- impacted very positively with that facility. So many people worked there or, you know, provided services there or -- but it has been empty.

It is -- whatever we try to do for Stratford I can't imagine this can't be one of the top things so I'm delighted to see the bill. It's about time and I know we are getting some

federal support for this because I -- am I right in -- did I read that correctly?

SENATOR KELLY: Yes you did.

REP. KOKORUDA: So anyway thank you for bringing this bill forward.

SENATOR KELLY: And -- and thank you for your question. As you stated, you know this is far too long. We indicate that in 1996 this was part of a first round of base closings that the federal government undertook in the -- in the -- I'm going to say the wake of the end of the Cold War.

And I believe this is the last Army base that has not been redeveloped throughout the country. And there were scale cutbacks over time on the parcel but it is an exciting project. We have almost a mile of waterfront on the Housatonic River.

So when you start to consider the fact that we have almost 78 acres of the developable property on the water in Fairfield County adjacent to an airport, this is a really exciting opportunity to put this back on the Grand List, put people to work and really get some things going in a positive way for Stratford.
Thank you.

SENATOR OSTEN: Are there any other questions?

I just have a -- a couple. I was -- I was wondering do you know if they've done any of the -- the studies on the brownfields that are there and whether there is an intent to actually access some of the brownfields money?

SENATOR KELLY: I -- I'm not sure about whether they're going to access the brownfield monies to help remediate the property.

SENATOR OSTEN: And do you know if they've done any assessments on what is there that needs to be cleaned up? I'm just curious that's all.

SENATOR KELLY: My recollection of what's there is that there have been studies to try to identify the contamination and the amount and potential. I'm not sure whether the developers would be able to address that better. I do know that it -- it was significant.

SENATOR OSTEN: And do you know if some of the jobs that you talked about, the 600 jobs, will be mitigated by the most recent press release that was out saying Sikorsky was going to get the new helicopter do you know?

SENATOR KELLY: I -- I'm not sure that these would mitigate those types of jobs because the jobs at Sikorsky are very highly skilled, well-paid technical jobs. I mean those are the types of jobs that we want to keep here in -- in Connecticut and I -- I'm not sure that we're looking at a manufacturing base here.

But certainly, to the extent that we could create good paying middle class jobs, I would like to see that happen at this site and obviously wherever we can keep manufacturing in Connecticut to help those 600 families I'm in favor of that also.

SENATOR OSTEN: Great. Thank you.

Are there any other questions?

Thank you very much, Senator, for coming.

SENATOR KELLY: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR OSTEN: Appreciate it.

Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR McLACHLAN: Good morning, Senator Osten, Representative Rojas, distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee. I'm here to speak in support of House Bill 5349, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TIME IN WHICH CERTAIN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY OWNERS MAY APPEAL AN ASSESSMENT.

As you all know, in the assessment process in the State of Connecticut, which occurs every five years, five year point, it has to be a statistical reassessment and then a physical reassessment every ten years.

In the City of Danbury and neighboring communities of Candlewood Lake they have either just completed recently their reassessment and -- or are implementing it in the coming year or two. What's happened is the properties that were assessed retained their value and so people would get their -- their revaluation and say gee I did okay, the value stayed about the same.

What they didn't realize was that everybody else's value went down and so when the tax bill came sometime later, obviously not until the end of June, then they realized that their taxes went up quite dramatically. The appeal window had long since expired and so the ability of them to appeal is not until the next calendar year.

This bill seeks to open the window one more :

one of the reasons, again, is because of this condition of isolation in the state and Maddie's Fund relies on collaborative efforts.

SENATOR OSTEN: Thank you very much.

Are there any other questions?

Seeing none, thank you for coming up today, appreciate it.

MICHAEL J. FREDA: Thank you for having us.

MARK BAILEY: Thank you so much.

SENATOR OSTEN: We have finished with the agencies and elected officials. We're on to the public.

Don Gershman is up.

DONALD S. GERSHMAN: Senator Osten, Representative Rojas, Senator Fasano, Representative Fox, Senator Fasano and Representative Aman and other distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee, my name is Donald Gershman and I am testifying today as a principal of Point Stratford Renewal LLC in support of House Bill Number 5368 in order to establish a -- an Infrastructure Improvement District within the Town of Stratford.

At the outset I would like to thank the entire Legislative delegation of the Town of Stratford for being committed to making the State of Connecticut an active partner in the revitalization of this area.

Point Stratford Renewal, my entity, was selected by the United States Army after a competitive public process to acquire and redevelop the long-vacant 77 acre Stratford

Army Engine Plant property which is located at the mouth of the Housatonic River.

This property, with almost a mile of waterfront, is a brownfield site that was formerly used by the Army and by military contractors for the manufacture of amphibious planes, helicopters, planes used in World War II and most recently tank engines.

Today the property sits with about a million and a half square feet of largely unoccupied industrial buildings. We are pursuing a mixed use redevelopment that leverages the significant waterfront resources along the Housatonic and enriches the Town of Stratford as well as the entire region.

Our plan calls for the Transit Oriented Development with up to 1,500 units of a variety of housing and up to half a million square feet of retail, shops and restaurants, medical and professional offices, a hotel and a wide variety of speciality uses.

These will serve to connect this property with the Lordship section of Stratford as well as the downtown areas, Metro North and the entire region.

The reuse of this brownfield site will bring jobs, tax revenues, and significant economic activity to the Town of Stratford and to the region. Significantly it will improve the ecologically sensitive riverfront environment and, for the first time in close to a century, open the riverfront to the public.

We are committed to incorporating green technologies into our redevelopment conserving water and energy, managing storm water and

impacts of traffic and parking. We have worked with and have the support of both the U.S. Army and the Town of Stratford in connection with this project.

House Bill 5368 provides essential financing for this redevelopment to occur. The Act permits the creation of the Point Stratford Infrastructure Improvement District which -- and authorizes the District to issue bonds to finance the construction of public infrastructure improvements. The bonds will be repaid from the incremental real property taxes generated by the development solely within the District.

In order for the District to issue these bonds, the District must enter into an Interlocal agreement with the Town of Stratford which must be approved by the Stratford Town Council. This will establish the amount of the incremental real property taxes that will be dedicated for the repayment of bonds. The District bonds will not be -- will not be general obligations of the Town of Stratford.

I'd like to thank you for raising this bill for a public hearing. We strongly believe the Act is necessary for the viability of this project and urge you to approve House Bill 5368.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about this proposal.

SENATOR OSTEN: Are there any questions?

Seeing none, thank you very much for coming up and speaking, appreciate it.

DONALD S. GERSHMAN: Thank you.

POINT STRATFORD

Sen. Osten, Rep. Rojas, Sen. Cassano, Rep. Fox, Sen. Fasano, Rep. Aman and other distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee:

My name is Donald Gershman and I am testifying today as a principal of Point Stratford Renewal LLC ("Point Stratford"), in support of H.B. No. 5368, "An Act Establishing the Point Stratford Infrastructure Improvement District Within The Town Of Stratford" (the "Act"). I would first like to thank the entire legislative delegation of the Town of Stratford for being committed to making the State of Connecticut an active partner in the revitalization of this area.

Point Stratford was selected by the U.S. Army, after a competitive public process, to acquire and redevelop the long-vacant 77-acre Stratford Army Engine Plant property, located at the mouth of the Housatonic River. This property, with almost one mile of waterfront, is a brownfield site that was formerly used by the Army and by military contractors for the manufacture of amphibious planes, helicopters, planes utilized in WW II—including the "Kingfisher" and "Corsair"—and tank engines. The property has over 1.5 million square feet of largely unoccupied industrial buildings.

Point Stratford is pursuing a mixed-use redevelopment which leverages the significant waterfront resources along the Housatonic River and enriches the Town of Stratford and the entire region. Our plan calls for a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) of up to 1,500 units of housing, and up to 500,000 square feet of retail, office, hotel, and specialty uses, all of which will serve to connect this transformational community with Lordship, downtown Stratford, Metro North and the entire region.

The reuse of this brownfield site will bring jobs, tax revenues and significant economic activity to the Town of Stratford and the region. It will improve the ecologically sensitive riverfront environment and—for the first time in close to a century—open the riverfront to the public. Point Stratford is committed to incorporating green technologies to conserve and generate energy, manage storm water, and minimize the impacts of traffic and parking. Point Stratford has worked with and has the support of both the U.S. Army and the Town of Stratford in connection with this project.

The Act provides financing for this redevelopment project. The Act permits the creation of the Point Stratford Infrastructure Improvement District (the "District") in the Town of Stratford. Pursuant to the Act, the District may be formed upon the petition of 15 or more Town of Stratford voters, and with the approval of at least two-thirds of the property owners within the District. The Act authorizes the District to issue bonds to

finance the construction of public infrastructure improvements required for the development of the District. The District bonds will be paid from the incremental real property tax revenues generated by the development of property located solely within the District.

In order for the District to issue such bonds, the District must enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Stratford, which must be approved by the Stratford Town Council. The Interlocal Agreement will establish the amount of the incremental real property tax revenues generated by the development of the District that will be dedicated by the Town of Stratford for the payment of debt service on the District bonds. The District bonds will not be general obligation bonds of the Town of Stratford.

We thank you in advance again for raising this bill for a public hearing. We strongly believe the Act is necessary for the viability of the project and urge you to approve H.B. No. 5368. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about this proposal.



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*Testimony by Representative Laura Hoydick
Before the Planning and Development Committee
House Bill 5368
March 7, 2014*

Good Morning Chairmen Osten and Rojas, Ranking Members Fasano and Aman, and members of the Planning and Development Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity today to testify in favor of HB 5368, AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE POINT STRATFORD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT WITHIN THE TOWN OF STRATFORD

It is incumbent upon us as the legislature to safely return brownfield properties to our citizenry for public use. The redevelopment of Stratford Point is not only critical to Stratford but Connecticut's economic growth and renewal. The revitalization of the former Army Engine plant will mean more jobs and more economic activity in Stratford. When the plant closed in 1995 Stratford lost one of its biggest employers and this project will begin to fill that gap.

Stratford Point is a 70 plus acre parcel on the shores of Connecticut located where the Housatonic River flows to the Long Island Sound. It is a prime location for this project to succeed and become a valuable community partner with Stratford and the State of Connecticut for years to come.

Thank you for holding this hearing on HB 5368, I wish to express my support of the bill and ask the committee's favorable action.

Sincerely

Rep. Laura Hoydick



State of Connecticut

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Testimony by Representative Larry Miller
Before the Planning and Development Committee
House Bill 5368
March 7, 2014

Good Morning Chairmen Osten and Rojas, Ranking Members Fasano and Aman, and members of the Planning and Development Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity today to testify in favor of HB 5368, AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE POINT STRATFORD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT WITHIN THE TOWN OF STRATFORD

Although this parcel is off the beaten path, it is one of the best locations in Fairfield County located where the Housatonic River flows into Long Island Sound. This 78 acre site has a potential to stimulate growth for the entire region. In an effort to encourage development, tax credits will go a long way in bringing business and jobs to our area.

Not only will this site provide a much needed economic impact, but it is also the birth place of our nation's aviation and could also become a tourist attraction bringing in additional revenue for the Town of Stratford and the State of Connecticut.

Thank you for holding this hearing on HB 5368, I wish to express my support of the bill and ask the committee's favorable action.

Sincerely

Rep. Larry Miller

TESTIMONY
OF
THE HONORABLE MAYOR JOHN A. HARKINS
IN SUPPORT OF
H.R. No. 5368
AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE POINT STRATFORD INFRASTRUCTURE
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT WITHIN THE TOWN OF STRATFORD

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Friday, March 7, 2014

Chairwomen Osten, Chairwoman Rojas, Vice Chairman Cassano, Vice Chairman Fox, Ranking Members, and Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

As Mayor of the Town of Stratford, I am honored to offer my testimony in support of H.B No. 5368: *An Act Establishing the Point Stratford Infrastructure Improvement District within the Town of Stratford*. This bill would allow for the creation of an infrastructure improvement district, known as the Point Stratford Infrastructure Improvement District (herein referred to as the "District"), to help facilitate the construction of public infrastructure improvements, and allow for the District to issue bonds in an effort to help finance a successful redevelopment of the current Stratford Army Engine Plant (SAEP) brownfield site.

The Stratford Army Engine Plant has a storied history in the Town of Stratford. Built in the 1920s, the building was originally called the Sikorsky Aero Engineering Corporation. Following nearly a decade of airplane production for the Navy, Marine Corps, and private companies, the facility underwent improvements and was renamed the Vaught-Sikorsky Aircraft Division in 1939. The facility was further expanded in the early 1940s, as the plant continued to manufacture planes—including the Corsair speed fighter used during World War II. In 1951, The Air Force purchased the plant, and in the ensuing decades the plant underwent repairs and expanded to produce engines for aircraft, helicopters, hydrofoils, tanks, and hovercraft. In 1976, the Air Force transferred the property to the Army, and it was renamed the Stratford Army Engine Plant. The plant was closed in 1998 as a result of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, and a 1995 BRAC Commission's recommendation.

At the height of the Stratford Army Engine Plant's production, thousands of people were working in the facilities and contributing to the Town of Stratford and the State of Connecticut's economies. The government-owned, contractor-operated facility that once gave so much to the region, has for the past two decades been a decommissioned army tank engine site—a brownfield with vacant buildings, but a site with so much to offer. The redevelopment of this property, however, will once again bring the 77-acre waterfront to life, and turn it into a vibrant, mixed-use community that will generate revenue for the town, provide a boost to the town, regional, and state economies, and give the residents of Stratford and the

region an enjoyable destination to visit; one that is steeped in rich history and has a stunning view that overlooks the mouth of the Housatonic River.

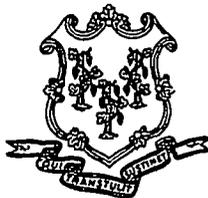
After a competitive bidding process, Point Stratford Renewal (PSR) was selected in October 2013 by the Army to acquire and redevelop the property. The developer's proposed plan would utilize the 4,500 feet of shoreline and 3,100 feet of frontage along Main Street to create a vibrant, transit-oriental community that would enrich both the town and the entire southwestern region of Connecticut. The redevelopment project will inject the local economy with economic activity and bring long term, quality jobs to the region. Furthermore, the reuse of this site will give a boost to the municipal tax revenue and greatly contribute to our economy and revitalization of the area.

The reuse and redevelopment of the SAEP site will bring Stratford's community to the riverfront for the first time in nearly a century. The project will include up to 1,500 units of housing and apartments, and up to 500,000 square feet of retail outlets, office, hotel space, and greenway—to name a few of the redeveloped site's uses. The developer is committed to environmental remediation of the land, as well as incorporating green technologies, thereby improving the ecologically sensitive riverfront environment. Additionally, the revitalized Stratford Point will serve as a transportation hub, and connect Lordship, downtown Stratford, Metro North and the surrounding region, while providing a prime waterfront destination for visitors from across the state and the country.

The SAEP redevelopment project is critical to the future of Stratford, and it will have a huge impact on our community. While a purchase and sale agreement has been reached between the Army and PSR, many steps remain until the project will be completed. To reach the full potential of the site, the development project will need to be implemented and funded. H.B. No. 5368 provides the essential financing needed to bring this project to fruition. The Act establishes the District for the enumerated purposes listed in the Connecticut General Statutes, Chapter 105, §7-326, including to extinguish fires, light streets, plan, layout, acquire, construct, maintain, and finance roads, sidewalks, crosswalks, drainage systems, sewers and sewage treatment facilities, environmental remediation, and other infrastructure improvements, among other purposes, as listed in § 1(b)(2) of the Act.

In order to finance the aforementioned infrastructure improvements for the development of the site and to carry out other purposes so enumerated to the District, the Act authorizes the District to levy taxes and issue bonds, notes or other obligations. These bonds are not considered debt of the State of Connecticut or the Town of Stratford, and are either backed by the full faith and credit of the District or by District fees, revenues or benefit assessments. Additionally, prior to the issuance of any bond, the District must enter into an interlocal agreement with the Town of Stratford and approved by the town council. Any bonds issued by the district will be paid for by property taxes from the project collected through the District's power to assess, levy and collect taxes and benefit assessments upon the land and buildings that are located solely within the District.

I would like to thank Representatives Hoydick, Miller, and Backer for sponsoring this bill. I would also like to thank Chairwomen Osten and Rojas, as well as the members of the Joint Committee on Planning and Development for raising this bill for a public hearing, and providing me the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of this proposal. I strongly urge the consideration of H B No 5368, and I respectfully request that the Committee act favorably so that the District, Town of Stratford, and State of Connecticut may begin benefitting from the Point Stratford redevelopment project



State of Connecticut

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Planning and Development Committee
March 7, 2014

In Support of:

H.B. No. 5368 An Act Establishing the Point Stratford Infrastructure Improvement District within the Town of Stratford

and

S.B. No. 266 An Act Concerning Property Tax Relief for Members of the Armed Forces on Active Duty Outside of the United States

Senator Osten, Representative Rojas, Senator Fasano, Representative Aman and members of the Planning and Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of both H.B. No. 5368 An Act Establishing the Point Stratford Infrastructure Improvement District within the Town of Stratford and S.B. No. 266 An Act Concerning Property Tax Relief for Members of the Armed Forces on Active Duty Outside of the United States.

H.B. No. 5368

First, I would like to address the importance of H.B. No. 5368 to the growth and development of Stratford and surrounding communities. This legislation will establish a special tax district across 78.32 total acres in southern Stratford, inclusive of the dormant Stratford Army Engine Plant. This is the first step in launching an expansive project to breathe life into the community, create new jobs and provide much needed tax revenue for the people of Stratford

Currently, the Army Engine Plant is a contaminated, inoperative brownfield. The area surrounding the plant has been vacant and unused for far too long. This project will enable us to transform the space into a place of action and growth. Many have advocated for this redevelopment for decades, and it is finally time to move forward.

The Stratford Delegation is united in our support of this venture. We envision an entirely new mixed use revitalization project, including space for both commercial and residential development. Restaurants, shops,

offices and new homes will rejuvenate a transformed waterfront. The mixed use space will allow for a variety of business opportunities, maximizing the potential impact on the local economy. We will establish a new community that will bring opportunities to countless families and spark job growth for years to come.

Unemployment in Connecticut is a serious problem that impacts thousands of families. According to data from the Department of Labor, Connecticut has had negative job growth over the past 25 years and 23,500 fewer residents employed today than there were in January 2011. In addition to the statewide job problem, Sikorsky recently announced a layoff of over 600 workers, with a majority of those individuals being employees in Connecticut

These numbers are daunting, especially for the people of Stratford, but solutions are in sight. The Point Stratford redevelopment project is crucial to rejuvenating the community and paving a road towards job relief for our local families.

Legislation to create the Point Stratford tax district will give Stratford the tools we need to seek appropriate financing for significant infrastructure development. It is the first and most critical step in bringing our visions to fruition.

Once we address this first hurdle, I look forward to a comprehensive planning and vetting process during which experts in all fields will be encouraged to share their input and help guide us in respectful and smart redevelopment. The people of Stratford have waited a very long time to move forward with this plan, and we are all dedicated to making sure the project is done right.

The plans are based on previous special acts which authorized the creation of improvement districts in Stamford, Bridgeport, Windsor, Southington and East Hartford, leading to significant community transformations. Similar to these projects, Point Stratford redevelopment will create exciting opportunities for not only our local community, but also our region and state as a whole.

It is imperative that the state support this crucial first step for Stratford.

S.B. No. 266

Today, I also would like to share my support for S.B. No. 266, concerning tax relief for members of the armed forces on active duty outside the United States. Currently, Connecticut residents on active duty in Iraq or Afghanistan are not charged interest on delinquent property taxes during their time abroad for a period of one year. I support expanding this law to all service men and women on active duty and stationed overseas - anywhere in the world. If an individual is serving our country on active duty outside of the United States, it should not matter in what country he or she is serving. Rather, everyone serving overseas on active duty, anywhere in the world outside of the U.S., should be treated equally.

We also need to extend legislation to cover the full time individuals are deployed overseas. This bill removes the current one year period during which municipalities cannot charge or collect interest, therefore assisting our active duty residents who are deployed for longer than one year. Since deployments can extend many years, we need to make this change to respect the entire length of deployment.

This bill makes two needed changes to our current legislation to ensure that municipalities better assist the men and women who risk their lives for our nation every day.

Thank you for raising these bills and for the opportunity to testify today.