



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

October 2, 2023

Ms. Linda Cruz-Carnall
Regional Director
Philadelphia Regional Office
Economic Development Administration
900 Market Street, Room 602
Philadelphia PA 19107

Dear Ms. Cruz-Carnall:

The Waterbury and Hartford delegations of Connecticut State legislators strongly supports the Northwest Regional Workforce Board (NRWIB) and the Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) for their Recompete Pilot Phase 1 Grant Application to the United States Economic Development Administration.

Approval of this joint application would deliver widespread strategy development and the approval of a RECOMPETE plan, which will later enable implementation, if approved, by the USED.A. NRWIB & CWP, the designated workforce development organizations for Waterbury and Hartford, Connecticut, are uniquely positioned to implement a RECOMPETE plan in partnership with local business & industry, education providers, community stakeholders, and public agencies.

As a delegation, we understand the needs of these communities and the goal of this project; to promote and sustain a healthy economy and business growth in the region. Waterbury and Hartford are two of the most distressed municipalities in Connecticut, with Prime-Age Employment Gaps significantly surpassing communities across the State. This first phase of this EDA funding will enable a coalition of diverse stakeholders to develop a strategic plan, spurring workforce development initiatives in order to alleviate economic distress and promote job creation.

The City of Waterbury, the "Brass Capital of the World," grapples with its legacy of vacant and derelict areas that were once major-employment hubs, providing a sense of community for workers and their families. Today, we view Waterbury's most recent successes in culminating over \$50M in total investments as a vital step toward uplifting this post-industrial City through community and economic development initiatives. We proudly support the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board and its supporting partners, as they are champions providing Connecticut residents' accessible, diverse, and long-term employment opportunities.

Considering the City's secured funding and ongoing workforce and brownfield redevelopment efforts to date, both the Strategy and Recomplete Plan, as a result of this EDA program, will alter the course of Waterbury resident's lives. The City's most challenged communities will be targeted to be involved in this project. The Freight Street Corridor (census tract 3523) and South End Neighborhood (census tract 3505) have been major points of culminated investments and brownfield redevelopment for Waterbury; these residents are challenged with abject poverty, high unemployment rates, environmental injustice concerns, food insecurity, brownfields, blight, and high crime rates. We have been recurring advocates of the City as they seek State and Federal funds to initiate economic development and revitalization.

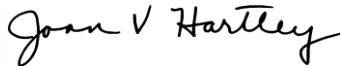
Similarly, in Hartford this RECOMPETE plan addresses communities have significantly high prime-age employment gaps because of declines in industry and businesses that have left behind a legacy of blight, economic distress, crime, and environmental justice & public health issues. The proposed projects in Hartford focus on several high-need communities: the Northeast Neighborhood and the Swift Factory Project, as well as the Upper Albay Avenue and Frog Hollow communities, linking to two Neighborhood Manufacturing Training Centers. These projects are in or adjacent to areas of intense distress including federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (e.g., LI-Hartford ID 1091575042), which in turn correspond to numerous Medically Underserved Areas (MUA) in the service area (e.g., Hartford Service Areas MUA ID 00480, 00481). Public health and poverty remain deeply interconnected, where over 50% of the population lives below the federal poverty level for a significant number of Census Tracts within the MUAs served. The American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2021 dataset) for Census Tract 09003501800 (MUA 0480) show that 54.5% of the population lives below the poverty level.

As such, the Strategy in this proposed grant application will focus on employment pathways into several key industry sectors including healthcare, manufacturing, food service & culinary, and innovative climate-friendly technology; the Strategy will target Hartford and Waterbury's most distressed neighborhoods to mitigate barriers of employment and socioeconomic growth. Phase 1 Grant Application focuses on strategy development, ensuring these communities are competitive and prepared to implement identified pathways & training programs, construction of training centers, and public input & community engagement. This RECOMPETE plan augments and leverages other major workforce investments in Hartford and Waterbury including EDA Good Jobs Challenge subawards and Connecticut's CareerConneCT occupational training grants, as well as the infrastructure of the American Job Center system as administered by CWP and NRWIB.

Our delegation strongly supports this proposal, as it aligns with the recent efforts amongst the States delegation to spearhead policies that offer 1) workforce development and training programs 2) re-entry programs for the State's most vulnerable communities, and 3) evaluation of education and workforce development program outcomes. The opportunities will ensure the State's Economic Action Plan goals to create 83,000 jobs over 5 years becomes a reality, while creating meaningful career pathways, supporting innovative industries, investing in vibrant communities, and improving Connecticut's business environment. Any jobs created will have a direct impact on Hartford and Waterbury, as well as the surrounding regions, and the State of Connecticut as a whole, making this a worthwhile application that the Waterbury and Hartford Delegations are proud to support.

We collectively look forward to collaborating with NRWIB, CWP, and the USEDAs as advocates for Waterbury and Hartford's future. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Senator Joan Hartley
15th Senate District



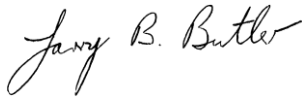
Senator Rob Sampson
16th Senate District



Representative Joe Polletta
68th District, Waterbury



Representative William Pizzuto
71st District, Waterbury



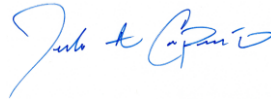
Representative Larry B. Butler
72nd District, Waterbury



Representative Ron Napoli Jr.
73rd District, Waterbury



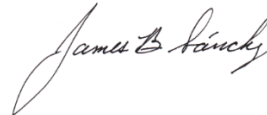
Representative Geraldo Reyes Jr.
75th District, Waterbury



Representative Julio Concepcion
4th District, Hartford



Representative Minnie Gonzalez
3rd District, Hartford



Representative James Sanchez
6th District, Hartford



Representative Matt Ritter
1st District, Hartford/House Speaker



Senator Doug McCrory
Senate District 2



Representative Maryam Khan
5th District, Hartford