

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1247

Title: AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE.

Vote Date: 4/24/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/26/2025

File No.: 901

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Finance, Revenue, & Bonding Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill sets and allocates the state's bonds to various agencies, departments, and other programs. The bill presents an outline for the State Bond Commission to redirect, improve, and expand state initiatives in the hopes to enhance the development of businesses and many other new and old initiatives within the state of Connecticut.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Beckham, Jeffery, Secretary, Office of Policy & Management

Secretary Beckham submits testimony in support of the bill, detailing how it prioritizes bond allocations to areas that require the most investment, with a large percentage of the budget being allocated for aid to municipalities, private organizations, and nonprofits. The budget also establishes new programs designed to spur economic development by redevelopment of vacant commercial spaces.

Navarretta, Nany, Commissioner, Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services

Commissioner Navarretta submits testimony in support of the bill, sharing some details on a few initiatives within the capital budget that will help to enhance DMHAS with their mission. The first of these initiatives the commissioner highlights the funds going toward this project will help to build a new facility for Whiting Forensic Hospital. The second initiative highlighted is repairs for many of DMHAS's facilities throughout the state, which will provide better client care as well as help for facility's staff. The final initiative highlighted by the commissioner was how these funds would also go toward updating fire safety to facilities within the state.

O'Keefe, Daniel, Commissioner, Dept. of Economic & Community Development

Commissioner O’Keefe submits testimony for the department in support of the bill. He explains how the bill will help to improve various programs that are a part of the department. Some of these programs the commissioner details are Brownfield Remediation and Development Revisions, Community Investment Fund, Innovations Clusters, and Good to Great. The commissioner concludes that SB 1247, by increasing the maximum award for these programs, DECD will further help to improve the department’s programs; it will provide overall improvement for them and continue to carry out their overall mission.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Freimuth, Michael W., Executive Director, Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA)

Director Freimuth submits testimony in support of the bill. He goes on to state CRDA’s support in the creation of, and funding for, a "greyfield" program to reclaim land for economic development and how it is essential to mitigate the economic damage caused by aging commercial real estate and the post-pandemic market downturn. The creation of this program can stabilize property values, support municipal revenues, and bring forth redevelopment to many communities within Connecticut.

David Kooris, Executive Director, Connecticut Municipal Redevelopment Authority

Supports the creation of, and funding for, the Greyfield Revitalization Program and the additional bond authorization for the Municipal Redevelopment Authority.

Vallieres, Kelli-Marie, Chief Workforce Officer, Office of Workforce Strategy

Chief Vallieres submits testimony in support of the bill. They explain briefly who the Office of Workforce Strategy is and their mission. Chief Vallieres details the usage of the funds within the bill related to OWS and goes on to detail some of the initiatives from these bond funds. Those initiatives being Career ConneCT, Good Jobs Challenge, CT Health Horizons, and Tech Talent Accelerator. It is hopeful that this bond authorization will help to further create further progress, better cohesion, and expand working practices for Connecticut's workforce development ecosystem.

Shea, Michael, Executive Director, Connecticut Airport Authority

Director Shea submits testimony to request an inclusion for a new bond authorization for the Dept. of Economic & Community Development (DECD). This bond authorization is to create a revenue guarantee initiative for airlines that can provide flights that can travel from Bradley International Airport directly to London Heathrow Airport. The director goes on to detail the Airport Authority's history and work and the results of that said work. Like the program Bradley International Airport has with airlines that travel to Dublin, Ireland, he believes a similar program for flights to London could be beneficial to the state financially, commercially, and publicly.

Louis Rosado Burch, Legislative Coordinator, Connecticut Education Association

Supports the bonds allocated for capital expenses for regional Educational Service Centers interdistrict magnet schools and to the University of Connecticut Health Center to support their Supplemental Air Filtration for Education program.

Connecticut Manufacturers Collaborative

Supports the budget, particularly the authorized funding for the Manufacturing Innovation Fund.

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns

Supports the funding for the Town Air Road program, the Local Capital Improvement Program, the Local Bridge Program, the Greyfield Revitalization Program, the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program. Opposes the lack of funding for the Small-Town Economic Assistance Program, and the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program. Opposes the lack of predictability in funding allocated to LoCIP and SEAP and opposes the 10% penalty to municipalities who fail to file certain information with the Department of Transportation as stipulated in the Municipal Grants-in-Aid.

Alysha Gardner, Senior Policy Analyst, Partnership for Strong Communities

Supports the \$800 million in new authorizations for the Housing Trust Fund, the Affordable Housing Program, and the Time to Own Program. Recommends amending the package to set aside \$150 million for extremely low-income renters. Proposes \$900 million in total new bond authorization for the Housing Trust Fund and the Affordable Housing Programs, with \$300 million dedicated to extremely low-income renters.

Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut

Supports the bill but asks that an investment in expanding the number of units and options of affordable senior housing be made.

Dr. Alice Pritchard, Interim Executive Director, Connecticut Technical Education and Career System

Supports the bill and the Facility Infrastructure Upgrades, Security Improvements, Vehicle Purchases and Emergency Repairs, and Information Technology and Support Equipment that it supports and enables.

Peter P. Souza, Town Manager, Windsor

Supports the bill and its creation of, and funding for, the Greyfield Revitalization Program.

David Waren, President & CEO, Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford

Supports the bill but asks for the reauthorization of, and increase in funding by \$20 million for, the non-profit security grant program as there has been an increase in hate crimes and targeted acts of violence, especially antisemitic incidents.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Rubin, Lawrence

Writes in opposition of the OWSA Grant Program, sharing the decline of farmers within the state of Connecticut.

Joshua Caskey

Wants to see further investment in Connecticut's public transportation system. Particularly, capital improvements such as the Bus Stop Enhancement Program and a bus study for Southeastern Area Transit district.

Lisa Hammersley, Executive Director, School, and State Finance Project

Opposes giving the secretary of the Office of Policy and Management the authority to withhold providing any Local Capital Improvement Program grant funds to a municipality as municipalities need predictability for grant funding.

The following individuals wrote in opposition of the omission for DEEP's Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Program...

- Tim Abbott, Conservation Director, Housatonic Valley Association
- Janet Ainsworth, President, Guilford Land Conservation Trust
- Cameron Beard, Stewardship/Land Acquisition Chair, East Haddam Land Trust, Inc
- Colin Bennet, Swamp Yankee Earthcare
- Olaf Bertram, Trustee, Old Lyme Land Trust
- Dean Birdsall, Executive Director, Litchfield Land Trust, Inc.
- Nicoletta Blevins, Government and Community Relations Manager, South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
- Joshua Bolduc
- Dr. Deborah Dickstein, Secretary, Warren Land Trust
- Sabine O'Donnell, President, Old Lyme Land Trust
- Barbara Douglas, Board Member, Winchester Land Trust
- Rae Ettenger, New England Conservation Policy Coordinator, Appalachian Mountain Club
- Jennifer Frank, Board Member, Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy
- Elizabeth Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Water Works Association
- Adam Goodman, Director of Land Protection, Aspetuck Land Trust
- Pete Govert, Executive Director, East Haddam Land Trust
- Joe Hendry, President, East Haddam Land Trust
- Walker Holmes, Connecticut State Director, Trust for Public Land
- Paula Jones, Vice President, Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy
- Joanne Klock, Member, East Haddam Land Trust
- Thomas M Lewoc Jr, President, Connecticut Waterfowl Association
- Dennis S. Main, President, Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc
- Connie Manes, Executive Director, Kent Land Trust
- Jack D. Morris, President, Meshomasic Hiking Club
- Rebecca Neary, President, Warren Land Trust
- Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director, Connecticut Land Conservation Council
- Eliza Paterson, American Farmland Trust & Working Lands Alliance
- Candy Perez, President, Highland Lake Association
- Jennifer Perga, President, Winchester Land Trust
- April Posson, East Haddam Land Trust
- Catherine Rawson, Executive Director, Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy
- Gail Sharkey
- Joan Smith, Vice President, Groton Open Space Association
- Ian Taylor, President, Madison Land Conservation Trust
- Mary Terhune, President, Bolton Land Trust
- John Triana, Board Member, Prospect Land Trust
- Mr. Jonathan Wheeler, East Haddam Land Trust
- Mrs. Stephanie Williams, East Haddam Land Trust

Reported by: Aston Foley

Date: 5/13/25