

Commerce Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-307 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISIONS TO

Title: THE COMMERCE STATUTES.

Vote Date: 3/24/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/3/2026

File No.: 561

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Commerce Committee

CO - SPONSORS OF BILL:

[Rep. Savet Constantine, 42nd Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

To further expand the powers held by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) which strives to increase the state of Connecticut's economic competitiveness, ensuring an economic stability and growth by supporting business expansion, workforce development, and community revitalization. This bill seeks to provide the DECD with more operational autonomy, manage changes in statute, internal workflows and overall make functionality more efficient.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE: (AS SHOWN IN [LCO #3337](#))

The amendment takes out Sections 19 – 30. With S- Language updates made to sections 1-18 including, Sec. 15 which now references a plan created by Connecticut Innovations in consultation with the DECD which works to increase the total funds provided to state businesses in accordance to the small business innovation research program. An annual report is now, no longer expected.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Economic and Community Development, Commissioner, Daniel O'Keefe

has expressed support of this bill explaining, that within his position as Commissioner for the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) he works to support and grown Connecticut's economy by attracting and retaining businesses and jobs, revitalizing communities, and preserving and promoting Connecticut's arts, cultural, and tourism assets. This bill through a series of revisions to the DECD's statues, seeks to provide the department with greater operational flexibility, more independence, internal workflow management, and stronger overall functionality which provides DECD with more agency to accomplish its mission.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Ray Martin submits testimony unrelated to this bill.

Supriyo B. Chatterjee submits testimony unrelated to this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Connecticut Land Conservation Council, Executive Director, Amy Blaymore Paterson

writes in strong opposition of this bill explaining, that section 15 of this bill allows the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to use up to 50% of the agencies Donald E. Williams, Jr. Community Investment Account (CIA) funding to pay wages of state employees previously funded by the Historic Preservation Fund. The CIA provides a consistent source of revenue for state programs centered on, land conservation and urban greenspaces, farmland preservation/dairy production, historic property preservation, and affordable housing projects. CLCC continues, stating that, allocating such a significant portion of the CIA's funding towards the DECD results in a reduction in critical funding provided to community projects in turn setting a precedent for continued loss in funding provided to grant programs across other sectors and the eventual destabilization of those impacted.

Similar testimony submitted with specification to Section 15 of S.B. 307:

Working Lands Alliance, Chair, Kip Kolesinskas

The Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, Executive Director, Tracey McDougall

Commission On Human Rights And Opportunities, Executive Director, Tanya Hughes

writes to oppose this bill specifically Section 26 regarding the changes to the Minority Business Revolving Loan Fund. Hughes notes, that there has been a long history of excluding minority owned business in the state of Connecticut and striking "minority business" in favor of "eligible municipalities" alters equity-based model to a geographic poverty-alleviation model. This commission emphasizes a need to recognize the long-term harm inflicted on communities once a "colorblind" perspective is adopted, in turn urging for this change to be prohibited.

LISC Connecticut, Senior Executive Director, Jim Horan writes in opposition of this bill.

LISC, a community development organization, works to create resilient, inclusive communities by ensuring all residents have access to safe health and affordable homes. S.B 307 threatens to downgrade reporting requirements for community development corporations (CDC's) and further postpone the Concentrated Poverty Grant Program, introduced in 2024, from 2026 to 2028. This grant program aligns with the mission of the LISC and has the power

to effect positive change however, this bill not only limits its influence but also further delays the program.

[Connecticut Preservation Action, President, Mary A. Falvey](#) opposes this bill recognizing, that diverting up to \$1 million of funding away from funding grants isn't only to the detriment of those in need of funding but the overall culture of the state of Connecticut. Falvey highlights, that historic preservation represents the protection of cherished community assets that stabilize neighborhoods and communities, the funding provided through CIA exists at the core of historic preservation projects across the state and the implementation of this bill disregards the intended use outline in the CIA's statutes.

Similar testimony submitted in relation to Historical Preservation:

[Preservation Connecticut, Board Chair, Caroline Sloat](#)

[Renee Tribert](#)

[Faith Community Initiatives, Board Member, Melvin H. Graham](#)

[Preservation Connecticut, Executive Director, Jane Montanaro](#)

[Brian Smith](#)

[AIA Connecticut, CEO, Gina Calabro](#) submits testimony opposing this bill citing, that the Community Investment Account (CIA) serves as the only form of funding for farmland preservation, historic preservation, affordable housing, and dairy farmers, this funding was created specifically for investments into community-based initiatives. Calabro notes, that within the CIA's statutes it has been explicitly outlined that, the majority of the account's revenue must be utilized for grants that benefit community-based projects with only 10% provided for administrative salaries. This bill threatens this and can lead to the disruption of over \$2 million circulated annually through community preservation work.

Reported by: Enumaah Dadzie, Assistant Clerk

Date: 4/1/2026