



# State of Connecticut COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 2, Hartford, CT 06103

*Promoting Equality and Justice for all People*

## **Transportation Committee Public Hearing – January 31, 2020 CHRO Testimony Regarding LCO #373, AAC the Sustainability of Connecticut's Transportation Infrastructure**

Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, Senator Martin, Representative Devlin, and members of the Transportation Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding LCO # 373, An Act the Sustainability of Connecticut's Transportation Infrastructure. While the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities was happy to see that attention was paid to minority contracting in the drafting of the bill, the CHRO would like to suggest a change to the disparity study language in Section 15, as well as a change to Section 18.

The CHRO has spent several years working with the Department of Administrative Services to pass a bill requiring a disparity study. Most recently, during the 2019 session the Labor Committee unanimously passed House Bill 7237, An Act Concerning a Disparity Study, which required the CHRO in consultation with DAS to conduct a disparity study. The state has not conducted such a study since 1992 and the data that would be provided by a new disparity study is critical to the viability of Connecticut's contract compliance laws supporting small and minority owned businesses.

The CHRO respectfully requests lines 731 and 760 be changed to include the CHRO alongside DAS in the conducting of such a study and the submission of the results. As the agency that enforces the state's antidiscrimination contract compliance and minority business set-aside laws, the CHRO is in the best position to provide the expertise and analysis needed for that piece of the disparity study concerning minority business enterprises. DAS has agreed to this change.

The CHRO is concerned with Section 15(a)(c). Any project the Department of Transportation is working on with state dollars should have set goals consistent with the state's disparity study, not federal law. The state disparity study will set permanent goals that do not need to be considered, evaluated or formulated. They would just need to be followed.

The CHRO also is concerned with Section 18 of the proposed bill. Specifically, line 870 adds an additional requirement for contractors to hire residents of the municipality where the work is taking place. Line 875 suggests the state could oversee this requirement or the state could hire a private consultant. The CHRO respectfully requests that the CHRO should be funded to oversee this new requirement. The agency is already overseeing the other contract compliance goals and it would be logical that this oversight should lie with the agency already reviewing the contract compliance of the same project.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding LCO #373 and the CHRO appreciates the committee's consideration of the suggested changes.