



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

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*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

March 1, 2016

To: Senator Joan V. Hartley, Co-Chair
Representative Chris Perone, Co-Chair
Members of the Commerce Committee

From: Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer

Re: **Support for HB 5045, AAC Revisions to the Small Business Express Program**

The HBRA of Connecticut is a professional trade association with about eight hundred (800) member firms statewide employing tens of thousands of CT's citizens. Our members, all small businesses, are residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry and to consumers. We build between 70% to 80% of all new homes and apartments in the state each year and engage in countless home remodeling projects.

We strongly support HB 5045 as it will greatly assist start-up companies find the all-important yet elusive capital they need to get going. In particular, removal of the 1 year requirement in lines 14-15 is a very positive change that will help new businesses get established. Finding capital to start a new business is one of the most difficult challenges a start-up faces. The Small Business Express Program should be available to startups and HB 5045 will help to overcome one of a startup's key hurdles.

The assistance DECD could provide to new businesses with this change in the program could consist of, among other things, the proposal we made in our testimony on SB 303, AAC An Entrepreneur Learning Permit. That is, it is not only the fees associated with filings – as well as the task of finding necessary capital – but also the multiple filings that must be done to various agencies (IRS, DRS, Sect. State, DOL, any licensing agency such as DCP). A new business owner who has not done it before does not know where to begin, let alone how to find the money to get started. **So, DECD should be authorized, if not already contained in its Small Business Express Program, to create a uniform comprehensive form (i.e., for all state agencies noted above; you file once and you'll get your Sect. of State Business ID, your state DOL UC number, your DRS sales tax number, any applicable license number, etc.). DECD should include this comprehensive form in a "new business package" that would also include advice on and the form for, for example, how to file for one's EIN with the IRS.**

Opening the Small Business Express Program loan funds to new businesses is a welcome step. In conjunction with other pro-business efforts, such as SB 302, SB 303, and HB 5047 in Finance, Connecticut can turn this ship around. Passage of all this legislation will give hope to those here and would be a welcome change to those thinking of coming here. Thank you for the opportunity to express our views on this important topic.

Vision: "Building CT's Economy, Communities and Better Lives One Home at a Time"
Mission: "Using Effective Advocacy and New Knowledge to Solve Our Member's Problems."