

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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COMMUNITY PARTNERS MEETING

IN RE: JANUARY 21, 2010

STATE ECONOMIC STRATEGIC PLAN 6:09 p.m.

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BEFORE: STANLEY McMILLEN, Ph.D., CHAIRPERSON

RE: STATE ECONOMIC STRATEGIC PLAN
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1 . . .Verbatim Proceedings of a hearing
2 before the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic
3 and Community Development, Community Partners Meeting, in
4 the matter of the State Economic Strategic Plan, held at
5 333 Kennedy Drive, Torrington, Connecticut, on January
6 21, 2010 at 6:09 p.m. . .

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10 CHAIRMAN STANLEY McMILLEN: Thank you,
11 Joanne. Thank you everybody for coming out. This is a
12 wonderful turnout. Yea, we'll have the lights so we can
13 see the presentation. Commissioner McDonald is a little
14 under the weather today and I said I can handle this
15 presentation, I've been doing these for some time now.
16 In fact, I recognize many faces from the first time we
17 were here in northwest Connecticut at UConn in
18 Torrington.

19 What we were doing at that time is
20 gathering your thoughts on what should the strategies be
21 for the strategic plan that was commissioned by the
22 Legislature in Public Act 07-239, Section 4, which
23 subsequently was codified as Section 32-10, in case your
24 looking at the statutes.

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1 So, what I want to is give you a brief
2 overview of the plan tonight as it exists; it's on our
3 web site; and then open it up for public comment. And I
4 will describe the specific types of directed discussion
5 and public comment that we want.

6 First I want the start off by saying that
7 a whole lot has changed, as you probably know, since July
8 '07 when this Act was passed. In March of '08
9 Connecticut entered the deepest recession since the Great
10 Depression, and we're not out of it yet. Even though, in
11 the nation gross domestic product shows some positive
12 growth, job growth hasn't started yet, people are still
13 losing their jobs across the country and in the State of
14 the Connecticut. And so that's really the sort of the
15 household -- the feel good measure that we're on the road
16 to recovery. I think we'll begin to climb out of it in
17 terms of we'll see job losses pretty much decline to
18 zero, zero job losses, by the halfway point of this year,
19 by June, an we could begin to see jobs added through the
20 remainder of 2010.

21 But one of the things we need to do is
22 feel good about what we have, and Connecticut has a very
23 strong health care industry, Connecticut is a hub for
24 science and technology, several of the companies -- and I

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1 look at these posters around the room and clearly that's
2 evident from the companies that are here. We have the
3 most productive work force in the nation. If you took a
4 gross state product per capita we're number one. We have
5 one of the most educated work forces in the country. We
6 also have the highest per capita income.

7 So if you look at what we have in terms of
8 our work force this is a place where companies want to
9 be. We have a competitive international presence, we
10 have more than our fair share of exports out of the
11 country and that's commodities only, we don't even
12 measure services that are exported and if you look at
13 companies like GE Capital or insurance companies they
14 export services around the globe. And we have
15 significant -- but we could improve -- our access to
16 venture capital.

17 On the other hand, we also have serious
18 challenges. These challenges are not unique to
19 Connecticut, but Connecticut as -- like the northeast --
20 has a significantly older population than other parts of
21 the county. These are demographic shifts that will -- as
22 I was talking with Bill Baxter before -- who's going to
23 fill our shoes when we retire. I look around the room
24 and I see some of us are not going to working in ten

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1 years, maybe less. So we need to think about how those
2 shoes are going to be filled, where are those workers of
3 the future going to come from?

4 We also have a brain drain, the 25- to 44-
5 year-old cohort is leaving the state looking for greener
6 pastures. Why? The lack of affordable housing, high
7 energy costs, a poor transportation system in the
8 southwest part of the state, and other reasons, the cost
9 of doing business, and starting a business in the state,
10 the permitting process, and so on and so on that many of
11 you are familiar with.

12 The other thing that we face is structural
13 challenges in the financial services insurance and real
14 estate market or industries and part of that was because
15 of the reason that this recession started and housing
16 boiled over into financial institutions in which
17 Connecticut has a disproportionate share of workers,
18 especially in the southwest part of the state. That
19 industry is reinventing itself, and we haven't seen the
20 job losses that we thought we'd see, but there are still
21 structural changes. The industry won't be as big, and
22 the leveraging won't be as high so bonuses and even
23 though -- despite what we hear on the radio -- bonuses
24 won't be as high, salaries won't be as high.

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1 The transportation automobile, as that
2 industry restructures that has repercussions for
3 Connecticut, and the defense industry looking head as it
4 restructures and reconfigures, that will have
5 repercussions for Connecticut as well.

6 Another challenge that Connecticut faces
7 is that our municipal services are highly fragmented and
8 duplicative, and that, I think, holds us back as we as a
9 state, as a region, compete with other regions, mega-
10 regions around the country, and around the world, who
11 have managed to combine their services into a regional
12 service delivery system, regional education systems,
13 public safety systems, public health systems, public
14 utility systems, and public works systems.

15 As I was saying, the economic forecast
16 appears brighter for later this year. The Connecticut
17 Business and Industry Association surveyed that many
18 firms are optimistic for recovery in 2010, but still
19 challenges remain. As we all know business costs are a
20 great concern. Most companies cite an unfriendly
21 business environment in Connecticut, and for most
22 government is to blame.

23 So in order to address these issues and
24 many more the Legislature and the Governor commissioned

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1 this plan, and it addresses competitiveness and ways to
2 strengthen the State's industries without singling out
3 any one industry or any one region. Strengthen the
4 State's work force and its performance, its economic
5 performance. The plan consists of three major parts, and
6 the bulk of the report is the middle part, the
7 comprehensive vision was derived from the ten public
8 hearings that we had, one of which was held at UConn
9 Torrington. From those transcripts we derived a vision.
10 The next -- and these were required elements of the
11 plan.

12 The next, the biggest part of plan was a
13 baseline characterization. Let's transcribe the
14 Connecticut economy in all its detail so we understand
15 what it is we're work within and working from. And once
16 we understand where we are and we have an idea of where
17 we want to go in the vision, then we need to construct
18 strategies, creative strategies to get there. So that's
19 what the plan attempts to do. As I said it does not
20 address specific sectors, or clusters, or regions, but
21 rather it provides the framework so that policymakers can
22 create fertile soil in which all industries can thrive.

23 The vision has multiple parts, and
24 somewhere around page 530 those -- I wrote a lot of plan,

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1 myself and my graduate students. I have it right here
2 too, yes, yea, I almost -- my fingerprints are all over
3 it so. You know, we tried to separate them. The many
4 things that we heard at those ten forums into areas that
5 were readily recognizable and addressable. So clearly
6 housing, energy, culture and tourism, those are
7 significant assets the State has that need to be
8 leveraged, business and business environment, the
9 government, at all levels. We need to rethink it and
10 this is a great opportunity to do that.

11 Our education and work force development.
12 That's one of our key assets and one of the primary
13 reasons businesses come to Connecticut and it's a key
14 ingredient in attracting and retaining employment. And
15 our transportation system, and it's not just land
16 transportation, it's water-borne transportation. We're
17 blessed with a long coastline that we can leverage to
18 move goods and people along the coastline.

19 The strategies -- and I started off with
20 152 or so many of them -- and the Commissioner and I
21 winnowed them down, some were similar so we combined
22 them, and she grouped them into three categories: talent
23 and technology, cultivating competitiveness, and
24 responsible growth. And so we took these 152 and they're

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1 now 66 from somewhere around page 530 to 542. And these
2 are some examples of some of the strategies in each of
3 the -- each of the categories.

4 Under "Talent and Technology" we're
5 proposing to create, at the highest level, a workforce in
6 education cabinet that would coordinate our educational
7 assets and leverage existing funding streams to, for
8 example, complete the high school redesign project; to
9 adequately fund and bring to scale our preschool
10 education program across the state. In addition, we'd
11 create \$100 million student loan pool and this loan pool
12 would be structured so that a college-bound student could
13 take out a loan for educational purposes attending any
14 university or college around the country. And if they
15 came back and lived in the state, for every year that
16 they lived in the state part of that loan would be
17 forgiven. And if they actually went into the science,
18 technology, engineering, and math, the STEM fields,
19 additional forgiveness.

20 So the idea is we can use public policy to
21 incent particular behavior and take our best and
22 brightest, educate them, and keep them here. And if they
23 are in the state for ten years, we've probably got them
24 because they've probably started a family and bought a

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1 house.

2 Another one is to establish a Connecticut
3 tech fund for the 21st century that would be directed to
4 underwrite the development of new technologies. In fact,
5 the DeLoit just came out with a study of advance
6 manufacturing in New England. I look at some of the
7 plaques around the room, and we have advanced
8 manufacturing presence in northwest Connecticut, and
9 indeed Connecticut excels, and New England excels,
10 relative to the rest of the country in advanced
11 manufacturing; and this is advanced materials, aerospace
12 and defense, optics, nanotechnology, biotechnology, and
13 so on. So this fund would seek to grow those industries
14 by making early investments and providing working capital
15 as those small firms especially engaged in these areas
16 would develop.

17 We're proposing to create a new tax credit
18 program, yet another tax credit program, that would
19 induce our wealthy citizens to invest in start-up
20 companies and move this talent and technology concern
21 would help us move technologies that are in early stages
22 in our universities, in Yale and UConn and Wesleyan and
23 other places, into the marketplace quicker to begin to
24 develop them into marketable products and commodities.

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1 And leveraging our large health care
2 system we would propose creating an Office of Clinical
3 Trials that would combine with not only our healthcare
4 system, but our pharmaceutical companies here to leverage
5 that particular part of their growth spectrum.

6 Under "Cultivating Competitiveness" we're
7 proposing to thoroughly examine the tax structure, and
8 I'm actually engaged in a study right now redoing
9 something I did several years ago to look at the economic
10 and fiscal impacts of all the tax credit programs we have
11 in the state since inception. Because one question
12 somebody might ask a legislator or you would be what's
13 the impact -- how much good has this particular tax
14 credit program produced? And so I'm going to answer this
15 question and so we can look at these things and maybe
16 amend them, or get rid of them, or enhance them if
17 they've actually produced significant growth in jobs and
18 gross state product.

19 We're also proposing to reform the budget
20 process by which we arrive at a state budget. I don't
21 want belabor that, we need to get one as quickly as
22 possible, it needs to be responsible, you need to write
23 your legislators and tell them to get busy and do it,
24 because one of the things is a stabilizing force. If we

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1 had a budget that we all subscribe to, that we all could
2 trust that was responsible, we'd have a great deal of
3 confidence, businesses would have confidence and could
4 move forward with investment.

5 One of our radical proposals is to reduce
6 the number of representatives in the House. In fact,
7 Nick Perno, who's an economist, made a suggestion a year
8 ago -- a year ago January 2009 when the Congress had
9 solicited suggestions for what we should do, Nick Perno
10 had a little piece in there, he says why don't we just
11 get rid of the House and just have a Senate, you know, a
12 unicameral legislature and I said, John, that's a great
13 idea. So actually the Commissioner - her wording of this
14 is to look at other states and the ratio and the number
15 of representatives to the population and clearly
16 Connecticut is over represented in that measure.

17 Another thing is to create a state
18 marketing fund. We have a lot of assets here, cultural
19 and tourism, our work force, our quality of life, the
20 companies that are here. This is a great place to live
21 and work, but the word isn't out there. We are in many
22 ways our own worst enemy, we need to get the word out.
23 And so what I'm proposing here is at least a \$30 million
24 fund to get the word out, market the state as a whole and

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1 the cultural -- the five culture regions may wince, but
2 I think we need a cohesive, coherent, coordinated message
3 that doesn't just get at the cultural and tourism assets,
4 but also the people assets that we have here in the
5 state.

6 And we also are suggesting ways to promote
7 regionalism. And that doesn't mean getting rid of home
8 rule necessarily, it means for towns to work together to
9 figure out how to share services, possibly share revenue,
10 because there are economies of scale and efficient that
11 can be gained. And I would add that we are in
12 competition with other regions of the United States and
13 the world who have larger economic regions that can
14 leverage significantly more assets to attract business.
15 That's what the game is all about. It's a global economy
16 and we are competing with the rest of the -- megaregions
17 and the rest of the world.

18 Under "Responsible Growth," we're proposal
19 to create a Responsible Growth Cabinet and this would be
20 to address areas of brownfield remediation,
21 infrastructure development, broad band penetration, rail
22 and waterborne transportation. We're proposing to create
23 a statewide port authority to combine the existing port
24 authorities and the airport into one statewide port

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1 authority that would leverage these assets as engines of
2 economic growth, as they do in MassPort, for example, as
3 they do in the Port Authority of New York-New Jersey, the
4 Port of Long Beach, the port of Seattle-Tacoma, and so
5 on. So the idea is to take the assets that we have, take
6 them away from DOT, and form an independent quasipublic
7 or private organization such as MassPort, and I just use
8 that as an example, it doesn't have to be exactly like
9 that. But we can emulate best practices to leverage our
10 coastal, our waterborne, and airport assets to grow this
11 economy.

12 To further promote waterborne
13 transportation, coastal transportation, and we propose
14 creating a marine investment fund -- a maritime
15 investment fund which would provide access to the ports
16 by road and rail, map modernize and securitize the ports,
17 right? Homeland security is a big issue. And we would
18 expand Bradley and collaborate with Boston and New York
19 airports as overflow. In fact, those discussions were on
20 when former Governor Rowland was in power talking with
21 MassPort.

22 And we would create a Responsible Growth
23 for the 21st Century Fund primarily to promote downtown
24 revitalization, brownfield remediation, and transit

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1 oriented development. So that we would incentivise
2 people living closer to where they work, efficient
3 transportation systems, and growth of housing, affordable
4 housing around transportation hubs.

5 So, this comment process, this is the
6 third of four forums, we're recording it, the transcripts
7 will be put up on our web site in about two weeks or so.

8 Speakers are nominally limited to three minutes, we'll
9 be rather forgiving. We want you to be specific about
10 what initiatives or area you're talking about and time
11 frame. And if you prefer, if something comes to you in
12 the middle of the night, you can e-mail me at this e-mail
13 address.

14 What we're trying to get through these
15 forums is to flesh out the strategies and initiatives as
16 they are presented in the plan. Not every detail is
17 there. I have some ideas about an -- and I put them
18 down, they haven't been presented publicly -- on what the
19 implementation details are, the time lines, the sources
20 of funding, the accountabilities, and the metrics are,
21 but we want to get your input.

22 Another -- another piece of this is
23 priorities. We had a hearing with Senator LeBeau, who's
24 chairman of the Commerce Committee and he wanted

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1 priorities. So one question one might ask is what
2 priority are these 66 initiatives in? And that's a tough
3 question to answer, and I purposely declined from setting
4 priorities because they -- they would be -- some of these
5 require legislative action and some of them require --
6 can be accomplished through administrative changes. And
7 the legislative changes would be parsed out -- in fact,
8 she said at that hearing that they would be provided in a
9 legislative package to goes to the legislature in the
10 next session, and they would be parsed out to the various
11 committees and they will establish their own priorities
12 on all of the legislative proposals that they receive
13 from all of the agencies and special interest groups.
14 But be that as it may we still would be interested in
15 your ideas on priorities, funding accountabilities and
16 other implementation details and steps or tactics to
17 accomplish these and your ideas for specific metrics.
18 Thank you very much.

19 So, what I'd like to do now is all those
20 who have signed up we're going to take you in order, and
21 if you would like to speak, if you're motivated as you
22 hear speakers, please feel free to sign up. Once all the
23 speakers have spoken then we will take a short break and
24 see if there are any others who would like to sign up.

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1 So I'd like to call first Dale Kroop.

2 MR. DALE KROOP: Hello.

3 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Hi.

4 MR. KROOP: Is this on?

5 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: That's for
6 recording.

7 MR. KROOP: Okay. And I have a copy of
8 this and I'm going to try and keep it to three minutes.

9 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Okay.

10 MR. KROOP: But can't promise you that.
11 Anyway, hello. My name is Dale Kroop and I'm the newly
12 elected president of the Connecticut Economic Development
13 Association. I've been in office, if you want to call it
14 that, 21 whole days. Anyway I'd like to thank you for
15 the opportunity to provide comments regarding this
16 important plan. And we're a statewide organization of
17 economic development professionals, commissioners,
18 institutional and private sector partners. Our comments
19 and recommendations reflect varying opinions on our Board
20 and within our membership, as well as conducting a very
21 recent survey of our membership regarding -- I had 70
22 goals, I don't know how I got 70 -- but 66 to 70 goals,
23 we're close. But a lot of information was included in
24 the plan, and we're grateful for this extensive analysis

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1 of the climate in Connecticut and we realize that the
2 process never ends it's dynamic, and it's always
3 changing.

4 Anyway, we recently did a survey on the
5 goals within the last few weeks. Pretty much all our
6 respondents agree with 95 percent of the goals, there
7 were very few of the goals that were disagreed with,
8 although there were lots of people that responded they
9 were neutral, who said they were not really sure how they
10 felt about many of the goals. And I think we derived
11 from that because it doesn't really provide for short,
12 medium, and long term horizons on the goals in the form
13 of an implementation plan, doesn't talk about funding
14 sources, or detailed benchmarks, we think that people
15 would want to have a little bit more information to have
16 a little bit more of an opinion on the goals.

17 From a narrative kind of perspective from
18 the organization I'll just touch on a few of the topics,
19 work force -- and I'm paraphrasing some of these things
20 and I'll hand you a copy of this -- first of all who can
21 disagree that sustainable and good paying jobs are
22 critical to the economy? All the work force goals are
23 commendable and most -- most of the survey responses were
24 very supportive of all the work force goals.

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1 But we'd like to see a little bit more
2 commitment to vocational training for those not
3 interested in or unable to attend college. Vocations
4 like electricians, plumbers, green vocational type jobs
5 cannot be exported. These types of jobs are needed in
6 every community and training needs need to be encouraged
7 and available for young people and other workers who
8 require retraining from whatever they're doing now.

9 In terms of transportation and
10 infrastructure, larger projects such as the proposed
11 commuter rail project from New Haven to Springfield could
12 have a significant positive impact in many areas of the
13 state. However, given budget realities and political
14 attrition we believe that other smaller investments in
15 public transportation would also have a significant
16 impact for our urban and larger communities statewide.
17 This would address the work force challenges of the
18 entire state. One example could be to add simply
19 additional bus routes in larger communities at a fraction
20 of the cost of the rail. We support the conversion of
21 buses to alternative energy sources.

22 In terms of structural and efficiency
23 issues across state agencies, this is a critical part of
24 building economic development partnerships statewide and

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1 creating a true team effort. The many proposed new or
2 revamped commissions and boards related to policy and
3 government efficiently are welcome. Some may be
4 redundant as several of the proposed groups currently
5 exist. DOT, DECD, DEP, and OPM, the alphabet soup, must
6 work together to make Connecticut a competitive place,
7 work together to make us a competitive place to do
8 business. The plan does pay attention to this need.

9 We would recommend that economic
10 development practitioners at the local and regional level
11 participate in all of the strategy groups because we
12 offer a unique vantage point and can offer years of "on
13 the ground" experience -- and speaking of years I will be
14 working in ten years, I can tell you that much. After 25
15 years so far.

16 Finally the plan includes goals to
17 consolidate brownfields programs. This is good idea, but
18 the plan ultimately should clearly show economic
19 development practitioners how the application process
20 will be significantly improved by doing consolidation.

21 In terms of marketing a web site CEDAS
22 strongly agrees with the marketing Connecticut should be
23 a top priority. It's necessary to be competitive in the
24 marketplace and to attract and retain businesses and

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1 jobs. Over 93 percent of survey respondents believe that
2 it's critical to invest in a world class web site and to
3 compete with other states across the country.

4 Many of our members have expressed strong
5 concerns that there's no clear strategy that specifies
6 how marketing funds would be allocated for these efforts
7 and how the recent elimination for the funding for
8 tourism would be reinstated. Tourism is one of
9 Connecticut's greatest assets and should be featured in
10 any marketing campaign.

11 Lastly, on the cost of doing business in
12 Connecticut, the goal to develop the Blue Ribbon
13 Commission on Taxation, which is Goal No. 25, is very
14 important particularly as it relates to responsible
15 growth and regionism, we all agree on those priorities.
16 And by the way, in the back of my presentation are
17 original comments when you were doing your outreach in
18 2007, and this kind of refers back to that, so if you'd
19 like to read that.

20 In our 2007 testimony we focused on the
21 cost of conducting business in Connecticut. Although
22 issues such as workmen's comp insurance, health care,
23 energy costs may not be tackled in this plan we believe
24 that these are the underlying and most critical factors

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1 immediately impacting small businesses across
2 Connecticut, not just big companies. These are the root
3 causes of why Connecticut ranks low nationally in
4 categories related to these critical components of
5 business apportionment.

6 We believe that the man is more focused on
7 community development issues rather than these core
8 economic development problems experienced statewide.
9 Affordable housing, zoning, responsible growth are all
10 issue that is are important, but we are concerned that
11 the plan focuses too strongly on these issues and that
12 commitment is required -- the commitment required for
13 those goals will take away needed resources from these
14 other more critical areas for the small business sector
15 in terms of the cost of doing business in Connecticut.

16 So just to summarize, CEDAS is an
17 organization whose dedicated members can bring unique
18 insight and extensive economic development experience
19 through the strategic planning process, and we stand
20 willing and able to help DECD to help move this plan to
21 the next level. The next phase must focus on setting
22 priorities and implementation. A management plan must
23 outline short, medium, and long term strategies. We also
24 believe that the various elements of the plan need

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1 updating because of the underlying data is nearly three
2 years old and reflect a different economic climate.

3 We recommend that the DECD develop an
4 administrative or implementation plan similar to that as
5 what is required of us when we seek your funds for
6 federal funds, and we look forward to working with you in
7 this effort in 2010. Thank you for your time and
8 attention. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you, Dale.

10 MR. KROOP: And I'll leave this with you.

11 Thank you very much.

12 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Okay. Scott
13 Robbins?

14 MR. SCOTT ROBBINS: My name is Scott
15 Robbins. I live and work in northwest Connecticut I'm
16 nowhere near as polished and prepared as the previous
17 speaker, but just some comments and ideas and thoughts
18 and concerns I had in listening to this, I haven't had
19 time to much more than browse through the plan itself on
20 the web site.

21 One of the first things that I know is a
22 concern of -- as even as the normal citizen, is the time
23 frame for this. I mean, living in Torrington I've seen
24 how long a redevelopment process can take. And how long

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1 it can be -- how long it can drag out and stuff, and if
2 this is something we're looking forward to, for a you
3 know, ten-year, twenty-year plan that's fine, but if it's
4 going to take ten years before the thing even starts for
5 a lot of us it's going be really tough to get people
6 behind it.

7 Big question is a question, however, good
8 the plan is, can we get the Legislature to stand behind
9 it, to understand what it is that the -- why we need this
10 plan done, and to help us do it? Because there obviously
11 not -- my personal opinion a lot of legislators have no
12 concept what it takes to run a business, because they
13 seem to be doing everything they can to hurt it.

14 Another hopefully in this thing as part of
15 some of the goals you've had would be the encouraging the
16 use of state products, state service, state, you know,
17 home grown stuff. It's been mentioned, we're sending our
18 troops over to Iraq and Afghanistan with ammunition made
19 in China, with armor made overseas. We have companies
20 and people in this country and in this state that can do
21 those kinds of things and we should be supporting those
22 and promoting those instead of letting them all go out of
23 the state and out of the country.

24 One of the challenges I know that's going

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1 to face this is how to develop all this stuff without
2 destroying the character and the history that we do have
3 in this state, which is one of reasons why we have that
4 older population and stuff, because we've been here for
5 200, 300 years, and Colorado's only been out there for
6 115. So we do have a lot of that and that's important.
7 Nobody wants that, I don't think, to just wipe that off
8 the map just to create something new. Hopefully in this
9 is -- I don't know, because I'm not in business myself --
10 what is available and I haven't done a lot of research on
11 it, but the assistance and advice for businesses,
12 especially the small business owners in the state which
13 are the backbone and the nuts and bolts what keep the
14 economy rolling.

15 Question a lot of these committees and
16 counsels and stuff that are mentioned, I just have a
17 concern that we -- if there's a need to create more
18 government in order to get this done? Is there away
19 possibly this stuff can be worked into or reorganized
20 existing committees, existing structure in the government
21 without having to add multiple, multiple, multiple more
22 people to report to and get involved in the chain.

23 Is there going to be a way to get whatever
24 funding we end up organizing with this safe from

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1 legislative manipulation? In other words, great that we
2 have this plan, we have this whole thing worked out, and
3 all of a sudden the budget takes a hit and all of a
4 sudden all this money gets sucked out of everything we
5 planned for to try to bail the state out. Is there
6 anything that can be done with that? That's government.

7 One of the big challenges I can see in
8 this is convincing the -- individual municipalities to
9 work together. We've seen some of those efforts start
10 with consolidating purchasing of salt, sand, that kind of
11 stuff. Some of it works, some of the towns say, nope, we
12 don't want to be -- we want to be our own person, we
13 don't want to be stuck in with this. We've got to work
14 on that that kind of mentality of it's beyond the time
15 frame where that's suitable anymore.

16 As far as Bradley airport, specifically
17 with that, it struck me because we do need to develop it
18 and develop it smartly. I've seen what happened in
19 Florida as an example of what not to do. Daytona Beach
20 Airport rebuilt itself about 12 years ago. Brand new,
21 great looking place, absolutely beautiful. And the
22 general thing that's happened is they decided they want
23 to make their money back quick. They've raised their
24 gate fees and they've driven all but about two different

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1 airlines out of the airport. And so they've got a great
2 looking airport that they just can't get the business to
3 come there because the airlines won't go there because
4 of the cost of it. So we need to watch, you know, you
5 have to price the stuff so we are making our money back
6 on development, but not so much to price the vendors we
7 want to put in there to keep them out, you know, from
8 doing business. That's about it. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you, Scott.
10 Okay. Doug Parker?

11 MR. DOUG PARKER: Okay. I'm Doug Parker,
12 I'm the president and executive director of the Northwest
13 Connecticut Economic Development Corporation, talked to
14 you up at UConn a few years ago.

15 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Yup.

16 MR. PARKER: Number one, I think it's very
17 impressive, it's a very thorough, incredibly thorough
18 document. You basically took everything you heard, kind
19 of blended it together. So I think it's very impressive
20 what you've come up with. I would agree with Gary LeBeau
21 in terms of the next step obviously is priorities and
22 establishing time lines, etc. So I'm sure you're well
23 aware of that, that's where you're going to go anyway,
24 but in terms of getting everything out on the table it's

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1 there. Very, very thorough. So congratulations. That
2 certainly was not an easy effort.

3 The one -- obviously I'm here for
4 regionalization; page 536 of the plan, No. 5. "Encourage
5 regionalization and give priority for federal and state
6 programs to those communities that form regional
7 partnerships." That's pretty much the only thing we
8 could find in a 500-and-something page document that even
9 touched on this topic. We're a little disappointed in
10 that. It's a start, and we realize that Connecticut is
11 169 towns with individual personalities and
12 regionalization is not an easy issue.

13 So what we're proposing is we have a
14 current CEDS, Comprehensive Economic Development
15 Strategies, for those of you that may not be aware of
16 that term. For ten of the twenty towns throughout the
17 northwest corner. We're ready, we're ready we're poised
18 to go to twenty towns. We have the COG, the Northwest
19 Connecticut Counsel of Governments; and the Litchfield
20 Hills of Elected Officials, ready to move forward and
21 create a twenty town, basically CEDS, Comprehensive
22 Development Strategy Plan.

23 For those of you who may not be aware this
24 is a federal plan it's EDA, from the Department of

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1 Commerce, Economic Development Administration. It's a
2 federally approved plan. They have a planning grant
3 which is a \$50,000 matching grant, and so that means they
4 will provide 25, you got to match it with 25. Our
5 problem is where do we get the 25, okay?

6 This is where I think the State could -
7 play an incredibly important role. So this is my comment
8 and then I'll elaborate. Cooperation between planning
9 groups -- and I think I did give you a written copy of
10 this so you'll have that, okay? Cooperation between
11 planning groups should be strongly encouraged and
12 supported. Completing a CEDS using the federal EDA
13 guidelines should be the goal. The State should support
14 these efforts by providing \$25,000 for the matching
15 planning grant available through EDA.

16 Economic development organizations
17 combining two or more regional planning groups in the
18 process should be eligible to receive the \$25,000 to
19 match the EDA's \$25,000 for the planning grant.
20 Establishing regional cooperation and identifying
21 regional priorities should enhance the State's strategic
22 plan. Regional economic strategic plans that are EDA
23 CEDES approved should also provide a road map for all of
24 the towns and cities within the region. This will

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1 greatly assist towns in completing the required plans of
2 conservation and development and serve as a guide for
3 each town's POCAD.

4 Most of you are aware that every town must
5 do a POCAD every ten years and update it. Most towns --
6 they are great on the conservation side especially in the
7 northwest corner. When it gets to the development side,
8 it's like we don't want it. That's basically the bottom
9 line, it's like we don't want any development, blah,
10 blah, blah.

11 Are there samples of development that are
12 conducive to the northwest corner? Absolutely. Culture
13 and tourism is a huge, huge economic driver in our
14 region. Should we be supporting that sector in that
15 industry? Absolutely. So are there economic things that
16 we can do that aren't going to screw things up so to
17 speak and kind of ruin the environment? Absolutely. So
18 I think there are a lot of strategies that can be
19 developed. So we're ready to jump forward, but we need
20 the State to kind of jump in and help us is really what
21 it boils down to. I'm probably going over my three
22 minutes.

23 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: That's fine. We
24 have plenty of time.

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1 MR. PARKER: The two things that I've
2 heard over and over again are taxation and
3 overregulation. I'm sure you've heard that a million
4 times as well. So incentives. I think, you know, what's
5 the counterbalance to that is instead of, you know,
6 adding more taxes and adding more regulations is creating
7 incentives to keep the companies you want to keep here.
8 So are there ways to do that, I think there are and I
9 think those are some things that are going to obviously
10 be discussed.

11 And finally -- and I'll kind of wrap this
12 up so I'm not going on and on here. We did identify --
13 we spent the last two years really kind of looking at the
14 region and talking about what are the are issues -- and I
15 do work very closely with Rick Lynn and the Litchfield
16 Hills Counsel and Dan McGinnis of the COG, so, you know,
17 we're in -- and then Joanne, obviously, is our vice-
18 president, so Joanne with the Chamber. So we are really
19 working together to put this together. We came up with
20 seven major issues that really kind of permeate the whole
21 economy of this particular sector.

22 Revitalization of city and town centers,
23 and Bill Baxter obviously is a point man in Torrington on
24 that, along with Rose, and a lot of the other people in

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1 Torrington. But every city and every town has a city
2 center, and you're hearing now that the town centers, you
3 know, drug stores moving out, shopping center -- not
4 shopping centers but the country stores are moving out.
5 Everybody is having the same issues how to you keep those
6 vital. Energy, we had a big energy conference in July.
7 We happen to have FuelCell is located right in our
8 region, OptiWind is located, we have some very, very
9 cutting edge technologies right in our region so we've
10 been obviously trying to support them as much as
11 possible.

12 Transportation. If you talk to most
13 people they say keep people out of here, our roads are
14 pretty decent. I think Route 7 is obviously an issue,
15 but Route 8 is actually a pretty, you know, I think most
16 people would love to have a Route 8 with that kind of
17 traffic on it. But our railroad systems were a wreck to
18 be quite honest. Haven't been upgraded in 70 or 80
19 years. So we did request and again, DOT has been very
20 responsive in the rail department. They are both in line
21 now to get upgrades from -- from probably federal
22 stimulus money, but we have two railroad systems in our
23 region, the Naugatuck which goes from basically Waterbury
24 up into Torrington, and the Housatonic which goes from

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1 all the way down, I guess, below New Milford all the way
2 up to the Mass line. Both of them have not been upgraded
3 in probably 70 or 80 years. They are now in line, we did
4 support that. We did it as a region and they are now on
5 line to get some upgrades

6 Work force development. Again, that was
7 alluded to. We have the University of Connecticut in
8 Torrington, we also have the Northwest Community College.
9 They are both members of our Board of directors, we
10 have, you know, they're both involved with us. So we do
11 work with them very closely, so that's something we
12 always have. And actually tomorrow we have a meeting and
13 we're inviting we have a superintendent of schools coming
14 onto our board as well. So we have public schools,
15 UConn, we also have Northwest Schools, so we're trying to
16 work with everybody.

17 Culture and tourism. I also have happen
18 to sit on the Board with that. It did go from five
19 regions down to three regions. It's now going to be
20 called the Western Connecticut instead of Northwest
21 Connecticut, it's something including 65 towns that are,
22 so that's obviously a little bit of a management issue.
23 I do work very closely with John Asera who's the
24 northwest and Jim Whitney down in the -- they're the two

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1 directors.

2 So, a huge issue for us, brownfields.
3 Another issue that we've addressed here in the region.
4 We now have a brownfields inventory. We hired Arthur
5 Bogan as a consultant through a grant from Northeast
6 Utilities, thank you for them. And so we now have an
7 inventory for brownfields. We are looking at
8 prioritizing that list and looking at particularly
9 Torrington Winsted, some of the areas that are CEDS
10 probably eligible for some of those reimbursements.

11 The last one is agriculture which is a
12 huge issue in our region. Farms are disappearing.
13 They're gone. Dairy is tough to be -- it's tough to make
14 a living as a dairy farmer these days. We are seeing a
15 little bit of bounce back actually beef, believe it or
16 not, grass-fed beef and some of the beef producers are
17 coming back. What we are finding is what we call value
18 added farmers market, etc., and I'm actually involved
19 with some of that at a local level as well. So we are
20 seeing that people will pay for local, they will pay a
21 higher price for locally produced goods.

22 I live in Litchfield, we're fortunate to
23 have Arathusa, not many people have an Arathusa Farms in
24 their backyard. And with the kind of capital that they

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1 have behind them, but they are now producing high quality
2 local milk, they are charging top dollar, but these are
3 world -- these are literally world class cows in world
4 class conditions.

5 So that's what we're seeing. We're seeing
6 a bounce back, but it's a very highly specialized in
7 agriculture. There's a lot of concern about keeping
8 farmland as farmland, so I think that's a continuing
9 issue is how do you do that?

10 And the last issue and then I'll be quiet
11 is forestry. 75 percent of Litchfield County is
12 forested; 50 percent of the state is, incidentally. And
13 one of the things that we keep hearing there is there's a
14 lot of forested area, but it's not necessarily well
15 managed. So forest -- forest management is an issue, is
16 there some economic value? Yes. Number one, getting
17 people in there to do the thinning and doing it in a
18 responsible way. Should we be looking at hardwood
19 planting over the course of time to create kind of a -- a
20 hybrid for furniture? We have a lot of furniture makers
21 in the region. So there are some very creative ideas out
22 there.

23 So I think, you know, are there economic
24 development opportunities? Absolutely. But again, it

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1 goes back to we need the State to help us to kind to move
2 to that next step and put together our regional strategy
3 which we then think will come back to the State, and then
4 you can say if all these regions come back all of a
5 sudden you're going see a consensus, you're going to see
6 the same things are showing up on the radar screen over
7 and over again.

8 Well, anyway, all right, be quiet. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you, Doug.
11 (Off the record.)

12 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: There were only
13 three people who signed up. Is there anybody else who
14 would like to speak? Bill?

15 MR. BILL BAXTER: My name is Bill Baxter.

16 I was a former business executive for 25 years, I spent
17 six years as the first selectman of New Hartford and four
18 additional years as selectman and I am now the executive
19 director of the Torrington Development Corporation. One
20 thing I'm learning these days is I'm glad I'm not in the
21 public office anymore because that's not one of the top
22 choices for work force these days as we all well know.

23 But I'd like to talk about my points and
24 they will be limited. As a member of Litchfield Hills

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1 Counsel of Elected Officials and president for a number
2 of years we put together the regional comprehensive
3 economic development strategy, and prior to this meeting
4 I read -- I read it for New Hartford when I was the first
5 selectman and interestingly enough we did a number of the
6 things we said we were going to do. Some by accident and
7 some by design. But today we have a waste water
8 treatment plant that's got a 400 thousand gallon
9 capacity, businessmen or people are already coming on
10 Route 44 to talk about property there. We have acquired
11 land for open space.

12 But it's really important, as I've seen in
13 my current assignment in downtown Torrington, is we need
14 to create the infrastructure that makes places good
15 places to be, to live, to work, and do commerce. And in
16 some cases we have to reverse the patterns of the past.
17 For example, in Winsted they've done a great job with
18 Main Street, Main Street, Winsted. They still need to
19 try to find ways to create diversification of population
20 and make it a attractive -- more attractive for people to
21 live there.

22 In Torrington we need to quiet the traffic
23 down on Main Street, we need to find ways that we can add
24 the housing component to our redevelopment effort.

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1 Critical to the effort is the
2 infrastructure improvements. We built our societies and
3 our towns around cars for the last 50 years, and we have
4 to diminish that. Although it's important to get from
5 place to place, it's equally important in a living
6 environment to quiet traffic and make living an important
7 piece of the infrastructure revival of any community.
8 Because if we don't do that we will fail.

9 And I hear the refrain often that why
10 don't we just get business to open their storefronts on
11 Main Street? And the fact of the matter is market
12 follows mass. And if you can't get people to live and be
13 in the downtown area, you're not going to get people to
14 open businesses there. And smart growth these days is
15 now becoming a concept that mixed use development really
16 responds to smart growth and open space.

17 In New Hartford, for instance, we have 96
18 percent of our land is green; 4 percent of it is viable
19 for economic development. Interestingly in Torrington 90
20 percent of our land is green, and 10 percent is focused
21 or available for industrial and commercial development.
22 And that's okay. It's okay. But we need to make sure
23 that we create opportunities for commerce, for
24 manufacturing, and for services in the communities we

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1 live, not in the communities that are a 30-mile drive,
2 but in the communities we live.

3 So my point to this hearing is that
4 infrastructure is critical to the global vision which is
5 a good vision to have. And I endorse that concept and
6 encourage the process to continue because I think it's a
7 good plan. Without a vision we have no destination.
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you, Bill.
10 Yes, back there? Please come up.

11 MR. JOHN MORICI: Hi, I'm John Morici, I
12 am the chairman of Economic Development Commission in
13 Winsted.

14 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: John, could you
15 spell your last name?

16 MR. MORICI: M-O-R-I-C-I. Thank you for
17 the compliment, we're doing your best with Main Street,
18 but there are some issues we really need to address with
19 Main Street and with downtown development. And I think
20 your plan goes a long way to addressing that, but the
21 funding is really, really necessary, and let me address
22 just a couple of things.

23 First of all we have a wonderful
24 Department of Transportation in this state but what they

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1 attempt to do is to move cars faster, more cars
2 constantly. That, in the more populated areas, say
3 Fairfield County, we really adds to urban sprawl, or
4 suburban sprawl, if you want to call it that. We're
5 really proponents of low volume highways so that people
6 will work where they live aside from traveling for an
7 hour-and-a-half. So to develop more and more highways in
8 the southwest portion of the state is really
9 counterproductive, both damaging pollution and in the
10 quality of life of people. So we should look into areas
11 of that.

12 But to be more parochial, our Main Street
13 really has to be modified. The Department of
14 Transportation in 1955 made it a superhighway almost.
15 We've slowed down the traffic somewhat by putting in a
16 median but still we -- you come to the center of town and
17 you enter a four -- two-lane highway to a four-lane
18 highway. This is not how people slow down and stop and
19 look and shop. And getting to the Department of
20 Transportation to get them to make modifications to do
21 perpendicular parking or diagonal parking they feel as
22 though this -- there's not a creative solution there,
23 it's a view of let's just move them faster and farther.
24 We have to look at that.

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1 But even more to address the
2 revitalization of the downtowns, what is necessary is --
3 and you are addressing it and we would rather refer to it
4 as work force housing as opposed to affordable housing,
5 it has a connotation most people do not like in this
6 area, but in work force housing. One of the things that
7 we look at in the redevelopment of a small city such as
8 Winsted or Torrington is to maintain the character of the
9 communities that we really love, and to maintain the
10 architecture that we really -- there's a heritage there.

11 And I think you're well aware of that and the State is
12 well aware of that heritage.

13 But where the shortfall comes is when we
14 get right down to playing the game. There is a
15 tremendous shortfall of finances. For example, we were
16 looking at =converting one mill building into housing,
17 and it's going to cost \$10 million to do the conversion.

18 If we spent \$6 million it's possibly a profitable
19 venture, but \$10 million it doesn't. Now there's moneys
20 available, both from the federal government and from the
21 State, but they're slow in coming. And what it does is
22 it really discourages developers, and discourages
23 developers, so they go away and go somewhere where it's
24 easier.

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1 We have to make it easier to obtain the
2 money to preserve those buildings and to redevelop those
3 cities. The way the cities are going to be redeveloped
4 is through increasing population with work force housing.

5 And I would focus on that, maybe take some money away
6 from building faster highways and put it into housing.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you, John.
9 Yes, sir, please come down?

10 MR. TED MURPHY: Ted Murphy. I'm a real
11 estate broker in northwestern in Connecticut, and I'm the
12 Connecticut Association of Realtors Executive Committee
13 for CAR.

14 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Um-hum.

15 MR. MURPHY: Could you pull up the slide
16 on strategies?

17 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: You mean this one?

18 MR. MURPHY: Okay, yea. I don't know if
19 it's the right spot. But all these ideas are really
20 great ideas, and you did a great job, Doctor. But I
21 think there's one underlying factor in Connecticut that
22 if you don't reinvolve that issue nothing else will
23 follow and that is regarding two things. One, the tax
24 structure in Connecticut, and the regulation structure.

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1 If you lose, as we have this year, really the crown jewel
2 of Connecticut, Pratt and Whitney, who was leaving who is
3 leaving the State of Connecticut, then that's the wake up
4 call for the executive branch and the Legislature and
5 they don't get it yet. And unless they do get it, I
6 think nothing else is going to follow.

7 So if there's anything you can leave from
8 this from my point of view is tell the Legislature to
9 wake up. They need to cut government and cut taxes
10 before any of this is going to follow. Otherwise we're
11 going to have an exodus from the state. I mean my
12 daughter is in her 20s, she went to school in Boston.
13 Guess what? She's probably out of here. And, you know,
14 keep the young people here or you're not going to a work
15 force.

16 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Right.

17 MR. MURPHY: So those are my two ideas.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you, Ted.

20 Along that line we've heard that sentiment everywhere we
21 go and there was a CBIA economic outlook about a week-
22 and-a-half ago in the Marriot Hotel in downtown Hartford,
23 maybe some of you were there, and you heard John
24 Rathgaybor stand up and he had a letter. And he said one

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1 of the things I want you to is to send a letter to your
2 legislators and here's a sample letter for you to doctor
3 up. But they don't get it, and they need to get it, and
4 we need to tell them we're fed up, and we're damn mad,
5 and we need to change things.

6 So I would encourage you, he said it
7 publicly and I just within the to echo. Of course, then
8 we had about an hour later we had the legislative
9 leadership on the podium and, well, needless to say it
10 was -- it was sort of an incredible 20 minutes of
11 squabbling that at the break 400 business leaders walked
12 out into the lobby and everybody was shaking their heads.

13 And we elected them but, you know, I can
14 say that, I'm in the executive branch. But the point is
15 that if we're dissatisfied with the legislative process.
16 And as I said here, one of the confidence builders that
17 we might have is having a responsible budget, and
18 whatever that entails, in restructuring government. So
19 it's up to us, all of the us to get that message to the
20 legislators. Yea?

21 MR. PETER KENT: Well, you took a lot of
22 what I was going to say.

23 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Oh, I'm sorry.

24 MR. KENT: No, that's all right.

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1 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: You can repeat it.

2 MR. KENT: I'm Peter Kent. I'm CEO of
3 Micron Electronics up in Canaan, and I was at that
4 meeting and partook in part of the meeting. I have no
5 prepared comments, but I wanted to address the fiscal
6 responsibility of the State of Connecticut. And I think
7 that while I applaud the plan and what's going on here, I
8 think we can add some words or some additional things
9 about utilizing, within all state agencies, best
10 practices, lean enterprise systems, lean transactions
11 systems to reduce the cost of doing government in the
12 State of the Connecticut and also improving services.
13 And business has done it for years and it's been very
14 successful for us, and it enables business to survive.

15 So I'd like to have you work on addressing
16 that further for fiscal responsibility. I know the
17 Commissioner agrees with a lot of that, and some is being
18 done within the State through, I think, the Department of
19 Environment Protection, they're working on streamlining
20 the process for --

21 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Permitting.

22 MR. KENT: Permitting. Thanks.

23 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you, Peter.

24 Yes, sir?

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1 MR. JOHN LAIVERI: My name is John
2 Laiveri. I'm the president of Sterling Engineering in
3 Barkhamsted. You've worked very hard to prepare a
4 beautiful looking plan. I'd like to register a few
5 concerns which occurred to me as you were speaking.

6 First, it feels so me, beautiful though it
7 may be, like a central planning exercise, and one that's
8 going to raise government control, designate favored
9 industries to support and increase costs and bureaucracy.

10 I'd like to associate myself with the remarks of Ted
11 Murphy and Peter Kent. Although I don't think the tax
12 structure is our problem, I think it's the level of
13 taxation, and we need to get the taxes down and the
14 regulation down.

15 What I hear from business people is not a
16 demand for central planning from the State. But they'd
17 like to be freed, unleashed to do what they do, and make
18 investments in their business with some hope of a stable
19 environment in which to have a predictable return. I
20 think we should be working hard to figure out why Pratt
21 and Whitney and other companies like it are leaving
22 Connecticut. I doubt it's because we don't have a
23 strategic plan. I think there are a lot of other factors
24 involved and we should find out what they are and address

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1 some of those.

2 Second, and the presentation you've made
3 here tonight, which I realize was abbreviated by
4 necessity. I saw no mention of manufacturing or of the
5 aerospace sector in this state which are and have been
6 important sectors. Manufacturing continues to create a
7 lot of high wage jobs. I'm concerned about that lack.
8 I'm also concerned about the demographic factors you
9 indicated and how we're going to replace the skilled
10 trades people, which are aging very fast. And our trade
11 in particular, machinists, it's in the high 50s, I think,
12 was the last statistic I saw. If we want to have a
13 vibrant manufacturing sector in the future, and I sure
14 hope we do, we're going to have to think about that. I'd
15 like to see more effort going into our vocational high
16 schools, for instance.

17 Third and last, as a member of the board
18 of Charlotte-Hungerford Hospital I saw a mention of
19 health care as a focus. I'd be interested if it's
20 appropriate later in the evening to hear something of
21 this plan -- implementation of this plan might mean for
22 the hospitals of Connecticut.

23 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you John.

24 Yes, sir?

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1 MR. REID HOLLOWAY: My name is Reid
2 Holloway. I'm a consultant. I'm also a Realtor in town.
3 I am just so moved by what you had had to say, and also
4 Mr. Kent and Ted, if brevity is the sole of wit you're
5 the champ. I, too, have the feeling that I almost feel
6 like a dinosaur talking about something that strikes me
7 as such inside baseball. There's no way that I can
8 respond comprehensively to all the points that you have
9 made. But if you would flip up the slide on
10 competitiveness it might just help me remind myself of
11 some of the impressions that I had as Mr. Laiveri did as
12 you were speaking.

13 Tax structure. We are taxing way too much
14 as Mr. Laiveri said, and particularly we are taxing too
15 much at the margin on income and on capital. That is a
16 critical point. And one of the things that was said at
17 the beginning of your presentation really made me think
18 about how insane it is to think of this state
19 monolithically when it's very obvious that you've got one
20 region that is Fairfield County and then you have the
21 rest of the State an they couldn't be more different in
22 character.

23 Because as with Mr. Kent's and Mr.
24 Laiveri's enterprises in Fairfield County you have very,

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1 very large employers such as I used to work for in New
2 York City; and up here you have companies that are
3 typically much less than a \$100 million in capitalization
4 and fewer than a hundred people, and those are the high
5 growth engines. That is where 90 percent of the net new
6 jobs are created. And even though this plan was enacted
7 as far as legislation in 2007, what has happened since
8 then really highlights where unemployment is created at
9 the margin. It is companies like up here that is are
10 going to save the day because they can grow faster.

11 As far as reforming the budget process is
12 concerned, I couldn't care less about the process. I'm
13 concerned about the spending and the taxation,
14 particularly capital formation and taxation of the
15 margin. State marketing fund, promote regionalism.
16 Again, those things do not concern me.

17 So I'm speaking really not program
18 specific. I can speak as a Realtor that I can tell you
19 we are in service to the kind of enterprises that these
20 gentlemen described in which Mr. Murphy is also involved
21 in, of course at a far higher level than I am. But the
22 existing capital that we have, I like the brownfields
23 aspect that you're talking about because transactions
24 simply can't be done with the personal liability issues

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1 involved and the environmental issues involved, you can't
2 get anything done. That's a tremendous waste and a shame
3 because we have so much existing capital that could be
4 converted. And I also agree with the idea that these
5 things do not need to be done programmatically. I think
6 Mr. Laiveri had a very nice turn of phrase in saying
7 these things need to be unleashed. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you. Someone
9 -- yes, sir?

10 MS. DELANEY: Good evening. My name is
11 Francis Delaney. I own a company, West State Mechanical
12 here in Torrington, it's a small service company, we
13 employ fifteen. Our market is primarily manufacturing-
14 type companies, companies like Sterling Engineering.
15 I've been in business for over 25 years, and have watched
16 the ebb and flow of business in this state, and sadly
17 it's been mostly an ebb. And I don't think that a lot of
18 what you promote is going to work without getting the
19 businesses to want to stay in this state. And I don't
20 think you answer it by just marketing.

21 And the problem with that is that the
22 businesses, in order to be in this state, have to know
23 that the state means it. And there's a great deal of
24 hypocrisy in the operation of the state where you'll have

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1 DECD saying they want to have businesses in the state,
2 but simultaneously you'll have the Legislature proposing
3 onerous legislation that makes it more expensive or puts
4 new regulations or other inhibitions on the businesses
5 who want to stay here and this is like putting the
6 billboard up on the state borders saying we don't want
7 you here really. And that is the reason that the
8 marketing that really does exist is that most businesses
9 already recognize that we're ranked 49th or 50th in the
10 country in business-friendly legislation. Pretty
11 impressive that we got behind Hawaii.

12 But what I see as a small owner is it is
13 just prohibitively difficult to do anything. I happen to
14 have a property, and I'm sorry to bore you with a short
15 story. But I have a property where I sold one of my
16 buildings. It so happens that the access to this
17 property crosses a State of Connecticut owned railroad
18 line and the railroad comes up, train comes up maybe four
19 times a year to -- for leaf peepers and for a wine
20 tasting. But it crosses my property.

21 So when I sold the building next to me I
22 went back to the DOT, I've owned a railroad crossing
23 there for, as I say, some 25 years. DOT would not be
24 willing to issue a separate license to the other party

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1 because they didn't know their credentials even though
2 they've been there for 15 years, and said that the only
3 way that we could get a crossing so that I could sell the
4 property was to create a new business entity, become
5 partners with my co-owner of the property, so to speak,
6 create a new business entity for which we had to pay or
7 an attorney to write up the agreements.

8 We had to get the Secretary of State to
9 create the business entity, and now we have to pay \$250 a
10 year as the business entity even though we do no
11 transactions, we do nothing, and we have to have a
12 separate insurance policy because that's a separate
13 business entity. so it now costs the two of us an extra
14 \$1000 a year merely for permission to cross the same
15 railroad track that no railroad goes up and down.

16 This is -- and this is something simple.
17 When I tried to bring three-phase power into that
18 property site and I had to cross the railroad a company
19 wanted to charge me \$40,000, not to do anything except do
20 the permitting process for me. Not to physically get the
21 lines in or anything. These are examples of why it's so
22 difficult to do anything in the state. And my only point
23 about this is I don't think a vision statement works
24 until you truly get the Legislature and the Governor,

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1 whoever that turns out to be, on board to truly believe
2 that they want to have businesses in the state.

3 I've made a joke many times that any
4 business person figures out what their distinctive
5 competency is going to be, or is, and that's what they
6 do. And I don't think the State has ever gotten there.
7 And if we want do gambling great, but let's do it better
8 than they do it in Las Vegas if we're going do to do
9 that. And the same thing goes.

10 If we truly believe that businesses
11 particularly as you put up technologies, medical, and you
12 got to include manufacturing, because if you don't have
13 value added I don't believe anything can survive. You
14 simply don't get to elevate yourself in life working at
15 WalMart or Home Depot, nothing against those places, or
16 Burger King, but they're not the mechanisms that provide
17 you to move up in status and -- and so we need jobs that
18 are value added that pay well. so you've got to be able
19 to attract those people.

20 Well, the world and certainly the other
21 states recognize that. And so until we have an
22 environment where the businesses truly believe that the
23 Legislature wants us here, we're going to keep getting
24 bills like the paid sick leave bill that came out the end

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1 of last year, and it's just another cost and burden on
2 businesses to be here. And that's why as I say from a
3 vision standpoint I don't believe you get anything to
4 work until everyone is signed on that you really want
5 businesses in the state. And then I think you fix a
6 whole lot of problems people will stay here if they have
7 good opportunities and good jobs they'll stay here.

8 It's equally easy to find support housing
9 because builders will build what people want, but if our
10 young people aren't staying here they don't have anyone
11 to build for. So these are mechanisms that we need to
12 start from the ground up and really have a premise in my
13 mind that we say we want you here, and those are the
14 billboards that we want to put up and then I think a lot
15 of your other problems get fixed on their own. So thank
16 you very much for the opportunity.

17 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you, Francis.

18 MS. JOANNE RYAN: Good evening. Joanne
19 Ryan. I represent the strongest business community in
20 the State of Connecticut, that of the Northwest Corner,
21 and I'm very proud to be here representing that Chamber.
22 However, I want to applaud you and thank you for what
23 you're doing and we're very appreciated that you chose,
24 and have the wisdom to know, that the people who are

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1 sitting here and the people that we all represent do know
2 what they're talking about. So thank you for being here.

3 What you have said tonight is perfectly
4 timed with our 2010 legislative agenda that was just
5 approved by our Government Regulations Committee chaired
6 by Bill Riskin. I'm sorry he can't be here, he was here
7 earlier but he had to leave for another meeting, and
8 approved by our board of directors. And I want to just
9 mention, I'm going to leave a copy with you still not
10 printed but this is it, because much of what we include
11 in this agenda is exactly what we are all referring to,
12 and it's entitled "Make Tough Choices for Change 2010
13 Legislative Agenda."

14 The first area refers to energy and
15 communications. Now, I'm not going to recite all of this
16 to you, but repeal unneeded legacy regulations affecting
17 the communications industry, oppose new rules that would
18 stifle competition, investment, and choice.

19 Under tax and spending policy I must read
20 this. "The economic and budgetary crisis demands that
21 the State make tough choices to curb the excessive growth
22 in public expenditures that increase employer costs and
23 threaten jobs. The State must take dramatic and
24 immediate steps to use taxpayer dollars more efficiently

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1 and create a more stable and predictable tax and revenue
2 policy. Make tough choices about levels of public sector
3 employment and public employee pay and benefits,
4 encourage regionalization and privatization of services
5 to decrease state and municipal spending, and conduct a
6 cost benefit analysis of some state programs."

7 We do refer to health care in the
8 northwest corner to protect our access to quality and
9 affordable health care and to examine mandates and cost
10 drivers to reduce the cost of health care and medical
11 insurance.

12 Specifically we talk about supporting the
13 nursing program for Northwest Connecticut Community
14 College because it does help local people including young
15 people changing careers to qualify for good jobs that are
16 needed because of the statewide nursing shortage.

17 With regard to the cost of doing business
18 in the public and private sector, we do talk about the
19 elimination of mandates and regulations that hinder
20 business and municipalities.

21 Work force development. Support a skilled
22 work force through UConn Torrington and community college
23 and vocational schools that match companies and students
24 and support the work force investment board funding for

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1 employee training.

2 And then finally we refer specifically to
3 the regional economic development to encourage and
4 support the state recognition of northwest Connecticut's
5 20-town economic region in DECD's economic development
6 plan to return the brownfield sites; to productivity by
7 supporting remediation and reforming environmental
8 liability laws; to improve regional transportation
9 infrastructure including priority road, rail, and transit
10 projects; to recognize culture and tourism as an
11 important element of northwest Connecticut's economy when
12 setting economic development priorities, and then finally
13 to support the downtown revitalization of Torrington and
14 Winsted.

15 And I will present this to you because it
16 is so very, very critical that we all work together and I
17 do have to applaud the leaders in the northwest corner
18 because there is tremendous collaboration among the
19 private and public sector. There is support of all that
20 we are doing through Rick Lynn's organization, Council of
21 Elected Officials, and Dan McGinnis's Council of
22 Governments, and the private sector with the leaders whom
23 you've heard tonight. So thank you very much and I know
24 that you will heed all that we are saying.

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1 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you Joanne.

2 MS. RYAN: You're quite welcome.

3 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Please?

4 MS. AURORA DALY: Good evening. My name
5 is Aurora Daly. I'm involved in the committee but I'm
6 here to represent the tourist industry. I was attending
7 the Commission of Arts and Tourism seminar and they said
8 that the budget for tourism in Connecticut was reduced to
9 a dollar, which I would like to see a collaboration to
10 the Economic Development Commission about how to
11 recognize tourism as an important and a viable source of
12 needed income for Connecticut. My business is actually
13 sending people away, but my -- but I know how much
14 visitors spend in other places and so I can see the
15 potential of tourism, it's a wonderful source of income.
16 And not this "staycation" thing because what that does is
17 just circulating the money in Connecticut. what we need
18 is an influx of new dollars in the state, and I would
19 like to see that collaboration. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you, Aurora.

21 Just to point out in my former tenure at UConn I did a
22 study that I actually finished up in December of 2006
23 where I pointed out the economic value of culture and
24 tourism to the State of Connecticut. It's a \$10 billion

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1 industry, that's not chump change. So, you know, I
2 understand it, and did a -- have the facts and figures to
3 show it. It's a matter of the Legislature understanding.
4 So, you know, the evidence is there. Is there anybody
5 else who would like to speak?

6 MS. KATHY LAURATANO: I'm Kathy Lauratano
7 from Salisbury, Connecticut, and I'm representing myself,
8 I guess. I came on the spur of the moment and originally
9 didn't intend to speak, but have been moved to do so.
10 Mr. Laiveri and Mr. Kent your remarks in particular
11 struck a chord with me.

12 I retired three years ago from the State
13 Police Department and am very familiar with the
14 regimentation of the government bureaucracy and the
15 squandering of funds and so on. And I have always had a
16 dream to have my own business and never work for someone
17 else ever again.

18 This state absolutely makes me inclined
19 not to have a business after all. With the regulations
20 they have, the kind of outrageous taxes they charge, and
21 I have nothing but admiration for the entrepreneurs who
22 do have businesses in the state and who have endured.
23 But I have seen since I came here in 1972 a steady drop
24 in the businesses that stay in the state and it all

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1 hinges on absurd regulation levels, and an astronomical
2 taxation and it just breaks the back of any expansion of
3 business and employment in the state. And it needs to
4 stop. And that means we have to change our legislature.
5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Yes? Thank you,
7 Kathy.

8 MS. MARY CAMPBELL: Good evening, I'm Mary
9 Campbell, and I'm from Torrington, and I'm a residential
10 appraiser and have been involved in housing matters as
11 well with local property owner organizations. And I
12 would like to endorse anyone who spoke about regulatory
13 competitiveness being needed, which I don't think that
14 Connecticut legislatively has been helping matters on
15 that score for some years now.

16 And when going to the Legislature to give
17 testimony on some things and whatnot, if I hear one more
18 thing about well, such-and-such a state is doing this or
19 another state is doing that, what seems to be referred to
20 is more regulatory, not making it more competitive. And
21 regulations certainly have their place, and we want to
22 have a safe community, and a safe working environment.

23 However, a report I came across in the
24 past year was one where it's a guide to board members of

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1 large corporations and businesses done by their
2 respective association of legal -- legal departments, the
3 attorneys. And they had a report that rated states red,
4 yellow, or green according to their regulatory and
5 liability business environment, and how the courts treat
6 things, etc. And the year before last Connecticut was
7 rated as yellow compared to New England states, New
8 Hampshire was green and other ones were red or yellow.
9 And this past year's more recent report was red.

10 And I think that Department of Economic
11 Development and other entities need to look at things
12 like that and find out how to raise our competitive edge,
13 because if we sit around and think that this is just
14 something to be talking about and not see how we're
15 actually being rated and do things to help it, then
16 reports are great, but actions speak louder, we should
17 encourage that.

18 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Yea. Thank you,
19 Mary. Yea, there is a section in the plan that deals
20 with competitiveness and there are a variety of think
21 tanks around the country, the Milkin Institute, the
22 Beacon Hill, and Kaufman Institute, for example, that
23 rate the states, and that 30-page section of plan digests
24 all of those -- the latest of those rankings and there is

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1 -- a one of the strategies is to look at those rankings
2 and deduce from them what it is that these think tanks
3 are looking at because these rankings matter. Businesses
4 and workers look at them. And so if we understand what
5 lies below them, there are implied policy changes, some
6 of them administrative and some of them legislative. So
7 we're acutely aware of that and that's one of the reasons
8 the commissioner grouped -- and there are probably 20
9 strategies that we didn't list here -- under the
10 competitiveness category. Yes?

11 MS. JAMIE MINOR: Hi. My name is Jamie
12 Minor and I'm just a resident of Torrington, and I've
13 kind of been keeping an eye on this process that you're
14 going through. And the only thing I would like to add my
15 comment is I actually grew up in Fairfield County and did
16 not relocate to the northwest corner until 2001. And
17 from my perspective Fairfield County is very, very
18 different from other counties in the state.

19 So when you prioritize initiatives it is
20 -- in my opinion does a disservice to the rest of the
21 state to consider all equal. Fairfield County has really
22 improved their standard of living and they were
23 unfortunately fortunate enough to have an influx of
24 people after 9-11-2001 that the rest of state may not

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1 have had; the money did not come over the border from New
2 York. And as they grow and improve the rest of the
3 state, it is my observation anyway that we have
4 deteriorated. And so if you're considering
5 prioritization that -- I can't fairly say that they do
6 well enough on their own, but the rest of the state needs
7 additional help. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you. Yes,
9 sir?

10 MR. CHRIS WILEY: Hello. My name is Chris
11 Wiley, W-I-L-E-Y. Through a political flyer I found this
12 meeting and figured out when it would be and who -- what
13 would be going on over the internet. I first off would
14 like to thank our state and our fine federal government
15 for reducing my paycheck 4 dollars per week for who knows
16 into eternity I believe until it will be. I put together
17 a quick list of things over the last week that I feel the
18 State has done wrong and what the State has done right.
19 The problem is what the thing that this what I feel the
20 State has done right is a really short list.

21 Last winter I talked to Michelle Cook, my
22 representative, and my senator which I can't remember the
23 name of right now. Michelle Cook was trying to push
24 through some legislation that made it illegal for

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1 municipalities to ban clotheslines. What is the State
2 doing dealing in clotheslines? I felt that was just as
3 ridiculous as the gentlemen from West State Mechanical
4 saying his railroad story. It's just insane.

5 I've either worked for or done business
6 with almost everyone that says they represent a business
7 in this room. I tried to sell computers for two years
8 until they started selling them on TV and I just couldn't
9 compete, especially with WalMart.

10 To continue on since I have reviewed my
11 list of what I feel the State has done right by not
12 passing the law banning -- saying that you can't ban
13 clotheslines, the other thing that they did that ruined
14 another job that I had was they went to the federal
15 government that changed -- I used to drive a truck for a
16 living. They upped the weight limit of the Class B
17 licenses from 18,000 pounds to 25,000 pounds. Most
18 people I know out there have trouble driving their 8,000
19 pound SUV, let alone a 24,000 pound truck. And that, I
20 feel, they should turn that back down to 18,000 pounds to
21 try to employ more people that actually get the license,
22 have gone to school, and truly know how to operate a
23 vehicle of that size.

24 I drive a Hyundai Accent as my personal

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1 vehicle, not only because I never have trouble finding a
2 parking spot with something that small, but I like the
3 fuel economy, too. Due to the fact that the State of
4 Connecticut has the highest tax rate on gasoline, I
5 believe only Hawaii or New York--

6 (Off the record.)

7 MR. WILEY: Thank you, sir. Which seems
8 to do in our transportation system immensely. Why live
9 here? I'll go down and move to where my parents did in
10 Georgia where the gas tax is I think 40 cents a gallon,
11 it's like 5 or 8. They come up and they pay 20 cents
12 more per gallon of gas.

13 The state -- here you were saying you
14 wanted to do all sorts of things. The legislature
15 increased the minimum wage which the guy at McDonald's
16 asking do you want fries with that I don't think deserves
17 eight-and-a-quarter an hour. All that did was make my
18 job less valuable, so why don't we turn it down to the
19 federal level?

20 The thing is ,too, the roads are horrible,
21 driving a truck on them was tough, it was even worse.
22 Why build more? Stop building more, fix what you have,
23 you know? I'm not going to put an addition on my house
24 if the roof is leaking, I've got to fix the roof first.

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1 The idea that all -- if you do some work
2 for a government agency all the people working on city
3 hall in Torrington right now are receiving union wages.
4 In the late '90s I worked for Overhead Door where I
5 visited Bicron, Sterling Engineering, West State
6 Mechanical, Howmett, all of them out there and fixed all
7 the doors on all their facilities. When I did work for
8 the state barn down on Avenue A I was paid -- union wages
9 was at the time for unskilled labor was \$19.65 an hour.
10 That was over 20 years ago. I still have not been able
11 to get my non-union wage up to that. And I have a skill.
12 I'm an electronic technician. So I feel the State should
13 do something about the State and federal rules that says
14 if you work for the government you should get union
15 wages. You don't deserve them. I know a lot of people
16 out there who are non-union workers who can do a lot
17 better job.

18 The other thing I haven't heard mentioned
19 this evening are illegal aliens. I know they're here
20 because they live next door to me. They're taking jobs
21 away and they're illegal. They shouldn't be here. And I
22 think the State is encouraging them to be here through
23 things like making the minimum wage so high and not
24 bothering to do anything about them.

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1 So I would hope that we could get the road
2 fixed, we could cut the fuel tax a bit to make things a
3 little bit better, get rid of our illegal aliens, and the
4 other thing is build some power plants.

5 I like electricity. It makes my -- the
6 other half of my house that I don't run on -- one half of
7 my house I run on natural gas, the other half runs on
8 electricity. So -- and if the rates keep going up and
9 they keep turning off the nuclear plants down there
10 because they're getting too old, let's build a new one.
11 Thank you, sir.

12 CHAIRPERSON McMILLEN: Thank you Chris.
13 Is there anyone else who would like to speak? Well,
14 let's take a short break and then come back. We have
15 about 20 more minutes and see if anybody else comes or
16 changes their mind about coming forward. Thank you.

17 (Off the record.)

18 (Whereupon, the hearing was adjourned at
19 7:56 p.m.)

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