

March 26, 2021

To: Appropriations Committee

RE: Support - Proposed SB 705, AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF PANDEMIC AND PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS (OPPHP)

Honorable Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Ranking Members and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am a former Chairperson and a current Commissioner at the Town of Groton Economic Development Commission (GEDC), a Commissioner of Groton Utilities (GU), a Board Director at CTNext LLC, and a Board Member of Connecticut Minority Business Initiative (CT MBI) within the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). Thank you for this opportunity to provide my testimonial in support for SB# 705.

The current COVID-19 crisis has challenged Connecticut's ability to respond rapidly to many needs. We must procure critical goods and materials within our supply chains. We must find ways to locate key local resources and production assets, including the availability of substitute, alternate resources and stock. More importantly, we must effect distribution of supplies speedily across our 169 townships and communities.

For recovery from the current crisis, and as preparation for the possibility of the next one, it is of crucial importance now to establish an Office of Pandemic and Public Health Preparedness, that shall co-ordinate statewide efforts against pandemics and other public emergencies. Given the mandate to ensure Connecticut does not face shortages of vital goods, have well-determined and effective logistics and distribution partnerships, in preparing for any future crisis by implementing smart plans and immediately closing identified gaps in them.

The OPHHP should work collaboratively with the private sector to improve productivity and avoid unnecessary costs and bureaucracy. To that end, the State and OPHHP need to adopt new technologies as global markets evolve, identifying critical supplies, review production capabilities, supply chains and other local manufacturing resources, before sourcing outside of Connecticut's borders.

In order for OPPHP to be efficacious, the State of Connecticut needs to establish beforehand *an independent entity, tasked to be agile building and maintaining a real-time database cum an authenticated state-based marketplace; and to serve as the business repository of all commercial-enterprises within Connecticut's 169 townships for domestic mobilization of all inventories and for equitable access by municipalities, State and Federal agencies, businesses, non-profits and utilities. While also harnessing American Rescue Plan's grants for to establish such a State-Based Marketplace.*

The OPPHP should have the advantage of dynamic online visibility of all suppliers (newer and current), manufacturers and distributors (small and medium-sized, minority-owned, and women-owned) of equipment necessary in the event of a pandemic, epidemic, power-failures or other public health emergency, including, but not limited to hand sanitizers, ventilators, hospital beds, modes of transportation, gloves, masks, gowns, other personal protective equipment, vaccine-related equipment

and storage, and emergency and disaster recovery equipment. In this way the OPPHP would appropriately bolster and prioritize domestic procurements of “Connecticut Made” inventories.

The OPPHP should establish a regimen to monitor online and inspect these strategic reserves on a quarterly basis to ensure that such inventory is maintained and stocked with supplies that have not expired and remain in working order. In addition, OPPHP must establish online protocols for public access, to connect with all local providers of personal protective and emergency equipment and develop policies that support and strengthen our State's medical and emergency supply chains.

Such a *real-time database cum state-based marketplace* should enable products/s showcasing and secure purchasing, end-to-end data system with the online transparency and the mitigation tools necessary to support the resilient production of critical materiel needed during a future state-wide emergency with supply chain disruptions. All of these and more, would well support the State and OPPHP in their mission to ensure reliable access to critical supplies, shareable supply chain intelligence with State and Federal partners, real-time overlay of emergency impact on companies, online Google mapping of locations, identification of bottlenecks in resource flow, and proactive testing of resiliency and weaknesses.

This state-based marketplace *cum* database could also serve as a platform for connecting, understanding and closing critical inventory gaps in Connecticut’s manufacturing capabilities and infrastructure.

In addition, such an online database would help promote existing manufacturing sectors, facilitate new innovations and engineering designs, support future corporate reshoring, attract new businesses and investors, among other actions, that would proactively promote Connecticut’s local, regional, and global companies, and as act as the “front-door” for regional tourism promotions.

Thank you for weighing this recommendation, yours respectfully,

George Mathanool,

[George@mathanool.com](mailto:George@mathanool.com)