



**House Bill 5508**

**AN ACT CONCERNING HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**Testimony of the Department of Administrative Services**

**Planning and Development Committee**

**March 11, 2026**

Senator Rahman, Representative Kavros DeGraw, Senator Gordon, Representative Haines, and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee. I am Michelle Gilman, Commissioner for the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). I thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Section 3 of **House Bill 5508: An Act Concerning Historic Districts and Historic Preservation**.

Section 3 proposes that when a state agency intends to erect or alter a building or structure within a local historic district, the agency must submit plans, elevations, specifications, materials, and—when applicable—demolition information to the local historic district commission. The commission would then have up to sixty-five days to issue a nonbinding opinion of appropriateness, including recommendations and the basis for any determination that the proposed action is not appropriate.

While the opinion is framed as “nonbinding,” this new process presents several significant concerns.

Requiring state agencies to formally satisfy the submission requirements of individual local historic district commissions introduces an additional review layer that is not currently part of the State’s capital planning and project development process and is duplicative of the current process.

The State already complies with the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA), a well-established process in which the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is always a participating entity. CEPA ensures that potential historic, cultural, and environmental impacts of state undertakings are thoroughly evaluated. Adding a separate municipal-level step could introduce additional complexity without meaningfully improving preservation outcomes.

For these reasons, we respectfully request the Committee’s consideration of removing Section 3 from the bill, as doing so would help maintain a clear and efficient framework for state capital planning while still supporting strong historic preservation practices.