



# community development partnership

*Promoting a vibrant and diverse community on Lower Cape Cod*

## Testimony

By

**Elizabeth Bridgewater, Executive Director  
The Community Development Partnership**

Before the

**Joint Committee on Community Development and Small Business**

**June 1, 2011**

In support of

***The Community Development Partnership Act (H.988 and S.1427)***

Good morning Chairwoman Dorcena Forry and Senator DiDomenico and through you, the members of the Committee. My name is Elizabeth Bridgewater, Executive Director of The Community Development Partnership (which, I'll note shares its name with the bill about which I am here to testify). The CDP is located in Eastham and serves the eight towns of Lower Cape Cod (including Harwich, Brewster, Chatham, Orleans, Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro and Provincetown). The CDP was created in 1992 to *promote a vibrant Lower Cape region based on the principals of environmental and economic sustainability, greater opportunities for low and moderate income residents, and the preservation of the our unique ecological, historic, and cultural character.* We believe as our founders did that the region of the Lower Cape had a unique set of characteristics and challenges that call for a place based approach to

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strengthening our community. That is why I am here to testify in support of *The Community Development Partnership Act*.

The Community Development Partnership Act will create a new and flexible fundraising tool that enables local communities, like the Lower Cape, to develop funding strategies that may effectively leverage the opportunities within their region. This is not a "one size fits all" approach but one that allows for different approaches in different parts of the state. For example, there is an enormous income gap between the second homeowner community and the year round community on the Lower Cape which has a dramatic effect on our housing costs and has caused a significant outmigration of young families from the region. This in turn negatively affects businesses as they try and retain their younger workforce. The tax credits available through the Community Development Partnership Act will serve as an attractive invitation for second homeowners as well as local businesses to invest in their community. Other communities may choose to develop a strategy that leverages corporate funding and some may target a variety of funding sources to meet their needs. The key is flexibility and that's what makes it a powerful tool for place based community development. In addition, the legislation provides set asides for rural communities to ensure that all of the tax credits don't gravitate toward larger suburban and urban communities that have the ability to develop and manage larger scale projects. This is important to us since our housing and economic development strategies are scaled appropriately to the size of our community and by appropriate, I mean small.

Small scale strategies can still have big impact. Our latest affordable rental housing development project, Thankful Chases Pathway, in Harwich is an excellent example of this. Thankful Chases Pathway consists of four buildings totaling twelve units of highly energy efficient affordable rental units. Photo voltaic panels on the rooftops supply 38,000 kwh of electricity which is used to offset common electrical

usage as well tenant use. Thankful Chases Pathway was one of 28 projects across the country that was recently recognized by the federal government with HUD's Doorknocker Award competition held every 5 years. We are very proud of this distinction.

But more importantly, it is meeting the needs of our community. Ten of the residents who live at Thankful Chases Pathway work in local small businesses. The remaining two households are handicapped and are currently not in the workforce. At our first community meeting this spring, I was reminded about the impact that safe, stable housing can have on a family. As we were reviewing the spring maintenance schedule, one of the residents indicated that this was the first spring in 12 years that she wasn't moving into Nickerson Park Campground in Brewster for the summer. She talked about how this new found stability has her thinking about the future in an entirely new way. She explained that she is a cancer survivor and was undergoing treatment while living in the campground. The lack of a long term home and her significant health issues had kept her very stuck and unable to pursue professional or personal development. Now, stable housing has changed her perception of the future and she was very hopeful. While this is a dramatic story, we actually heard some version of this story from many of the new residents. One is finally pursuing higher education. Another landed a new job that has management potential. Another, a 40 year old man who survived a stroke when he was 38 years old, has regained his independence by securing a fully handicapped accessible unit. As a result, he has started volunteering at a local non-profit. These conversations affirmed our commitment to increasing the supply of stable, year round affordable housing because of the impact it has on individuals, their families and the employers where they work.

Housing and jobs are very much entwined. That is why the CDP is also employing strategies that support good paying jobs in our region. The Cape Cod Fisheries Trust is an innovation program developed in

partnership with the Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association, to preserve the local day boat fishing fleet in our region. New fishing regulations put into effect last year has created a challenge for many local boat captains who have not yet developed the business acumen and/or capital structure needed to purchase costly fishing quota required by the new management system. To mitigate the negative consequences of the new management system, the Cape Cod Fisheries Trust holds fishing quota in community trust and leases it out at below market rates in return for economic, social and environmental benefits. The CDP also provides business technical assistance to the fishermen so that they can develop the financial management practices required to be successful in this new environment. The fishing industry is vital to the economy of Cape Cod and it's important that we preserve our fleet. The day boat scallop fleet alone, which consists of approximately 13 boats, circulates about \$5 million dollars in our local economy. This in turn impacts other local businesses and their employees.

These are two examples of projects on the Lower Cape that have a positive impact on our community and the economy. These are the types of projects for which we would seek funding through *The Community Development Partnership Act*. The CDP is planning to expand the Cape Cod Fisheries Trust Program by developing a financing program to help the fishermen increase their assets by purchasing their own fishing quota thereby making way for the next generation that needs the help of the Cape Cod Fisheries Trust to get started in the fishing industry. We are also currently assessing the energy efficiency and solar potential on all of our rental units to create a deeper level of affordability for the residents and to reduce our reliance on non-renewable energy sources. And we have just begun developing a program to help the small business community "go green" as a way to save on energy dollars and attract new environmentally conscious customers. The tax credits available through the

Community Development Partnership Act would provide an added incentive for local individuals, second homeowners and local businesses to invest in their community.

I conclude my remarks by thanking you for hosting this public hearing, for sponsoring the Community Development Partnership Act and for ushering it through the legislative process.