



PEDRO E. SEGARRA
MAYOR

**House of Representatives
Natural Resources Committee**

Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands

Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1038, H.R. 1237, H.R. 2157, H.R. 2490, H.R. 2504, H.R. 2745, H.R. 2947, H.R. 3222, H.R. 3452 and S. 684

Testimony In Support of H.R. 2504

December 2, 2011

Chairman Bishop, Ranking Minority Member Grijalva, and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands:

On behalf of the City of Hartford, which recently celebrated its 375th Anniversary, I appear before you today in support of *H.R. 2504*, the designation of the Coltsville Historic District as a National Park. I want to thank Congressman John Larson and Senators Lieberman and Blumenthal for their tireless support of this critical and important initiative. This effort, which also has the broad support of the City's business community, institutions, and organizations, is critical to the revitalization of Connecticut's Capital City, and will become a centerpiece of the City's effort to increase its focus on heritage tourism. It will also stand as model for future innovation.

The Colt Manufacturing facility, and surrounding structures, played a critical – if not essential – role in our national defense, defining the direction of the United States during a time of great exploration and innovation. It not only changed the face of national and international business and commerce, but also enhanced and further promoted the spirit of American business ingenuity, and its role in local community. It is symbolic that we are now again presented with a monumental decision that, if approved, will help to shape and encourage an ongoing renaissance in the City of Hartford and further promote the historic and necessary investment that Governor Dannel Malloy has made to restore funding designed to promote Connecticut's culture and tourism destinations.

The City of Hartford, State of Connecticut, and the collaborative of associated public and private entities, is deeply invested in the Coltsville neighborhood. The City has already rebuilt two schools and improved housing stock in the immediate area, and has committed almost \$3 million dollars in matching funds to improve surrounding streets in ways that will redefine space, improve visuals, increase safety and enhance the overall vibrancy of the area. We also stand ready to assist with other elements as greater scope and definition are added to the revitalization of one of America's first, and arguably most preeminent, industrial zones. A commitment has also been made by local businesses, property owners, and managers, such as the Colt Gateway, Riverfront Recapture and the Capitol Region Education Council, to preserve, maintain and manage their properties in accordance with the National Park Service and Historic Preservation Guide. A National Park at Coltsville will only require the Park Service to manage the 10,000 square feet designated in the East Armory. All other areas will be interpreted externally or an agreement with the National Parks Service will be established during the evaluation period outlined in the legislation.

It is important to briefly recognize the number of jobs this effort will create and the overall impact to the economy. Not only will the trades benefit through an intense construction effort, but long term job growth for the

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region across the entire job spectrum; not only in direct benefits to the leisure and hospitality sector, but also those critical indirect and secondary job markets that will be added and supported as well. With an intense focus and commitment in these areas, the region has already seen over 1,000 new jobs created and the infusion of \$175M into the regional economy. This designation, critical to the further restoration of Colt Manufacturing, has been independently estimated to generate an additional \$150M for the regional economy and create 1,000 additional jobs over the next five years. If no further development occurs, it will only yield \$30M and 229 jobs.

I thank you for your time and consideration and do hope that you will move this resolution forward, not only because this recognition is long past due, but because of the many positive outcomes that will no doubt result from Coltsville being designated as a National Park.