

Testimony of Paul E. Tsongas, M.C.

Delivered before the Joint Committee on Commerce
and Labor

on

H. 6726
October 28, 1975

Mr. Chairman:

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of H. 6726, establishing the Lowell Redevelopment Finance Corporation. I would very much have liked to appear in person before this distinguished committee, but my own committee hearings have made it impossible for me to leave Washington at this time.

In particular, I wish to thank Senator B. Joseph Tully, Representative Philip Shea, and the other members of the Lowell delegation for the foresight and leadership which they have displayed in introducing and supporting this piece of legislation. We believe the Lowell Redevelopment Finance Corporation (LRFC) to be an important step in restoring Lowell to its former status as an important commercial and industrial center of the commonwealth and of the region.

I am sure that this committee is well aware of the massive economic problems facing the City of Lowell. I will not remark on them, except to note that their complexity and their seriousness make it impossible for any one individual, any one organization, or even any one level of government to solve those problems acting alone. These problems can be solved, and I am confident, will be solved, only through the close cooperation and total commitment of every level of government, through the utilization of every vehicle now established to deal with these problems, through the participation of every organization in the private sector, and ultimately through the commitment of each individual citizen of Lowell.

The Commonwealth has made that commitment, in the form of the State Heritage Park, impending transportation improvements, and the many other programs aimed at improving economic conditions in the area. The City of Lowell has made its commitment through the designation of Community Development Block Grant funds to downtown improvements. A federal government commission is even now studying the proper approach

for a federal commitment to the city in the form of an Urban National Cultural Park. We see the Lowell Redevelopment Finance Corporation as a vehicle for the private sector commitment without which no redevelopment can succeed. By permitting the corporation to issue shares, the act provides an avenue for the participation of interested groups and individuals in the projects undertaken by the corporation.

This act is the result of long study of similar vehicles used successfully by other localities in their own urban redevelopment. It is the culmination of a joint effort by my office, state officials and representatives, notable Senator Tully and Representative Shea, interested municipal officials, and private lawyers, bankers, and consultants. It is a vehicle which will supplement, rather than replace or supplant, the efforts of existing groups and instrumentalities. As such, it is just one part, albeit an important one, in the massive task of restoring the City of Lowell.

In closing, I would like to say that the cooperation shown by all those who have been involved in the drafting of this legislation, and particularly that shown by the banking community in Lowell, upon whose cooperation the success of this vehicle so heavily rests, has demonstrated beyond all doubt that the Lowell Redevelopment Finance Corporation can, and must, play an important role in the revitalization of Lowell.

Mr. Chairman, Thank you.