April 10, 2013

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Mehul Dalal, MD, MSc, MHS

Chronic Disease Director

Community Health and Prevention Section

Connecticut Department of Public Health

410 Capitol Avenue, MS# 11CDD

PO Box 340308

Hartford, CT 06134-0308

Dear Dr. Dalal:

I am writing to express Bike Walk Connecticut’s support for the Connecticut Department of Public Health’s (DPH) application for the CDC’s Funding Opportunity Announcement Number DP13-1305 entitled, “***State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health***.”

Bike Walk Connecticut’s mission is to make bicycling and walking safe and for a healthier, cleaner Connecticut.  Working successfully for over 10 years in Central Connecticut, Bike Walk Connecticut recently evolved from a regional organization into a statewide organization, the only such group in Connecticut with statewide reach. We are particularly interested in promoting school-based bike programs, Safe routes to Schools and bike-friendly polices at the State and local agency level.

Some of our achievements include:

* **Bicycling Advocacy.**Bike Walk Connecticut is an effective advocate in state government.  In recent years, our advocacy culminated in the passage of a 3-Foot Passing Law requiring motorists to provide a safe distance of at least three feet when overtaking a cyclist; Complete Streets legislation, requiring all users of the roads to be considered when road infrastructure projects are undertaken; a bill creating a statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board; and revisions to Connecticut’s recreational liability law to keep public land open for recreational walking, running and cycling.

In 2013, we are collaborating with other advocates to ensure passage of a Vulnerable User bill to impose penalties against negligent or reckless drivers whose actions kill or injure pedestrians, cyclists or other non-motorized road users. We are currently involved with the Department of Transportation to help set goals for active transportation and the supporting infrastructure --bike lanes, sidewalks, bike trails, for example. We are also currently collaborating with the Department of Environment and Energy on the 2013 Bike to Work Day initiative and in ensuring that active transportation is a key element of the transportation component of the state’s comprehensive energy strategy.
* **Bike Friendly Communities, Businesses, and Universities.** Increasingly, Bike Walk Connecticut is providing assistance to community groups, local governments and businesses in their pursuit of Bicycle Friendly accreditation from the League of American Bicyclists. We are currently exploring ways to promote student and faculty champions for Bike Friendly Universities.
* **Education.** Increasingly, Bike Walk Connecticut is called on to help deliver bike education programs to adults, children and physical education teachers. We deliver Traffic Skills 101 programs to adults at our Hartford location, and work on an ad hoc basis with communities to deliver bike safety programs for families and children. The demand for these programs far exceeds our current capacity.
* **Discover Hartford Bicycle Tour.**To encourage cycling in a noncompetitive atmosphere, Bike Walk Connecticut orchestrates a fall bicycle tour of Connecticut’s capital city, involving hundreds of participants and scores of volunteers.

We welcome the opportunity to collaborate on this important public health initiative and look forward to working with DPH and the other clinical, community and municipal partners involved with the grant to improve the health of Connecticut’s residents. If we can be of further assistance, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Kelly Kennedy, Executive Director