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January 21, 2010

Dr. Richard Freeland
Commissioner
Department of Higher Education
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Commissioner Freeland:

On behalf of the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce, we are writing to you in support of the proposal by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth for the creation of public law school utilizing the \$23 million donation from the Southern New England School of Law.

The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce, a one thousand member-strong business organization, provides leadership on issues and activities important to our economy and quality of life. Our mission is to serve the interests of member businesses while advocating business advancement, economic growth, and job creation for the benefit of New Bedford and the SouthCoast region of Massachusetts.

The Chamber believes that the quality and accessibility of public education is critical to the health and prosperity of New Bedford and the SouthCoast economy. We also believe that the creation of an accredited law program at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth will have tremendous economic and community benefits for the SouthCoast and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

This proposal for a public law school will help address the critically important need for a better educated and trained workforce. Our economic development efforts have been hampered by low educational attainment levels, low income levels and chronically high unemployment. The introduction of an affordable, quality public legal education will broaden educational opportunity and career advancement for many of the residents of our region.

The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce remains a strong and active supporter of the creation of a public law school at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and encourages the Board of Higher Education to authorize the University to issue a Juris Doctor degree. We thank you for your consideration on this important economic development issue. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

James R. Pratt, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Roy Nascimento, IOM
President & CEO