

**TESTIMONY OF GUY P. RUSSO
CITY OF MIDDLETOWN**

Committee Bill No. 5069 - An act concerning the collection of municipal water, sewer and sanitation charges through the use of tax warrants.

My name is Guy Russo and I am the Director of the City of Middletown Water and Sewer Department. Today, I appear before you to register the support of the City of Middletown's for House Bill 5069.

First, I would like to compliment the drafter of House Bill 5069 because with very few recommended statutory modifications, the drafter has eloquently captured the full intent of this legislation. Most all of Connecticut's municipal cities and towns render some form of service or utilities to its citizenry. Currently, the laws for collection of these services are not uniform, and at times lead to both expense and waste on the part of the municipalities attempting to collect legitimately owed taxes and fees. House Bill 5069 merely codifies and affirms the intent of the alias tax warrant as an instrument for offering uniformity for the collection of these special fees by specifically enumerating them and placing them into statute, and thus removing any legal ambiguity that might exist over its usage, now or in the future.

As I am sure all members of the judiciary understand, municipalities are being asked to operate more efficiency; answering more requests for services from its citizens; and mandates placed on it by both State and Federal Government. This has led municipalities to aggressively seek to collect legitimately owed debt. Recent news and reports of extraordinary actions have been taken with regards to the collection of automobile taxes, parking fees, as well as, the volume of actions to collect property taxes highlights that municipalities need to guarantee their revenue in order to annually perform its job. Without an effective means of collecting these high volume and small dollar amount fees efficiently, municipalities end up carrying the debt as burden and the annual operations are normally thrust upon good paying citizens in the form of higher fees to cover current operating costs.

Therefore, once again I ask for your support of House Bill 5069 because it ensures uniformity of collection and conformity with the current laws with the State of Connecticut for the collection of these miscellaneous municipal fees and charges.

I thank you for your consideration and your support on this matter of importance to municipalities across the State.