CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES

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THE VOICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

TESTIMONY

of the

CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES

to the

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

March 7, 2008

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities appreciates the opportunity to testify on the following bill of interest to towns and cities:

R.B. 535, "An Act Concerning Property Tax Relief for Owners of Residential Real Property Abutting Real Property on Which Above Ground Electric Transmission Lines Are Located"

CCM opposes this bill.

It should be stated first that CCM understands the intent behind this bill – to provide aggrieved homeowners with relief from de-valued property resulting from above ground electric transmission lines. However, R.B. 535 goes about it the wrong way.

Municipalities are not responsible for the installation of the lines. In fact, affected towns and cities adamantly opposed installation of the lines – and spent millions in legal fees fighting such installation. To mandate that they provide a tax refund for a situation they had no control over – and tried mightily to prevent -- is unfair.

In fact, to ease the burden of affected property owners, municipalities, like Durham, have already provided property tax relief to affected homeowners.

CCM urges that, if the bill is to proceed, the State provide a reimbursement mechanism for communities. Or, the Committee could allow such persons to receive a credit on their state taxes.

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The affected municipalities are: Middletown, Haddam, Durham, Middlefield, Meriden, Wallingford, Cheshire, Hamden, Bethany, Woodbridge, Orange, West Haven, Milford, Stratford, Bridgeport, Fairfield, Westport and Norwalk.

CCM urges the Committee to reimburse municipalities for costs associated with the mandate, provide a state tax credit to property owners or take no action on this bill.

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If you have any questions, please call Ron Thomas, CCM's Manager of State and Federal Relations, or Gian-Carl Casa, CCM Director of Legislative Services, at (203) 498-3000.