



TESTIMONY  
of the  
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES  
to the  
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

February 23, 2009

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local governments - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to testify before you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

**Governor's Bill 833, "AA Authorizing Bonds of the State For Capital Improvements and Other Purposes".**

This bill would, among other things, (a) in FY 09-10, provide \$40 million for the Regional Incentive Grant program and \$10 million for regional purchases of equipment [Section 9], (b) repeal numerous bond authorizations that had previously been passed for municipal and other projects, (c) for fiscal year 10-11, provide \$5 million for open space grants, and \$2 million for brownfields remediation, and (d) provide \$500,000 in each year for grants to municipalities for updating their plans of conservation and development.

*Regional Cooperation*

CCM applauds the Governor and thanks her for the proposal for \$50 million in grants to municipalities for regional cooperation. Her proposal of \$40 million for the Regional Incentive Grant program would build on the success of the program begun in 2007 – in that year, \$8.5 million in incentive grants were made available for regional projects. Even with a very short response time, there were many more projects that could have been funded than ultimately were able to receive grants. There was clearly a hunger in the municipal ranks for incentives for regional cooperation.

Her new proposal for \$10 million in bonding for joint equipment purchases is an innovative and much-needed step forward. The way to greater cooperation in operations is to provide the funding to share and defray costs of capital equipment.

Grant programs such as these proposals should not be done just because regional cooperation is thought to be a "nice thing". Incentives for multi-municipal efforts are a way to more efficiency in the way in which government services are delivered in our state – these investments now show the way to lower costs for government *overall* in the future.

Simply put, Connecticut can increase government efficiency through greater municipal cooperation.

Connecticut needs to make structural changes to set the stage for more efficient delivery of government services and real property tax relief. The Governor's proposals in this bill are a tangible step in this direction, and we urge you to support them.

*Municipal Plans of Conservation and Development*

CCM also supports the Governor's proposal for \$500,000 in each year of the biennium to help municipalities update their plans of conservation and development.

Ultimately, Connecticut will be better able to maintain and improve the quality of life in our state if there is better coordination of land use planning at the local, regional and state levels. But that planning cannot be dictated from the top down, it will work best if the State and regions build their own plans off of what people see as the needs for conservation and development in their own communities.

We urge you to support this far-sighted proposal.

*Open Space and Brownfield Remediation*

Consistent with proposals to increase regional cooperation and improve land-use planning are proposals to increase bond authorizations for open space acquisitions and remediation of brownfields. Taken together, such an effort can (a) maintain Connecticut's undeveloped "green spaces", while (b) simultaneously spurring development where it's been before and where the infrastructure to support in already exists.

We urge you to increase the authorizations for these purposes proposed by the Governor.

*Repeal of Bond Authorizations*

The Governor has proposed to repeal numerous bond authorizations. Several municipalities have expressed concern about cancellations of projects that had been intended for their communities. We urge you to give special attention to their concerns and maintain authorizations where appropriate.

## ## ##

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Finley, Gian-Carl Casa or Bob Labanara of CCM via email ([jfinley@ccm-ct.org](mailto:jfinley@ccm-ct.org), [gcasa@ccm-ct.org](mailto:gcasa@ccm-ct.org), [rlabanara@ccm-ct.org](mailto:rlabanara@ccm-ct.org)) or by phone (203) 498-3000.