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Senator Coleman, Representative Sharkey and members of the Planning and Development Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. I am here to request that the committee consider my proposal **SB 224 AN ACT DIRECTING A PORTION OF THE MARIJUANA AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES TAX TO MUNICIPALITIES** for inclusion in a bill dealing with municipal revenue. While my approach for requesting this action may be unorthodox, I believe it is relevant to today's public hearing as a number of the bill's on the agenda deal with taxation and revenue.

My proposal would provide towns with an incentive to report matters to the Department of Revenue Services for collection of the marijuana and controlled substances tax. The marijuana and controlled substances tax which became effective on October 1, 1991, is imposed upon any dealer who acquires or is in possession of marijuana or controlled substances. While this statute has been Connecticut law for close to 20 years, it is not used as frequently as you might expect because there is little incentive provided to municipalities to utilize it.

SB 224 aims to expand this revenue opportunity by amending the statute to require that 40% of any proceeds collected by the tax be redirected back to the municipality that referred the matter to Department of Revenue Services, hereby giving back to the municipality monies needed to supplement their operating expenses and support the services which fight the war on drugs in their community.

Due to the current economic climate in our country and our state, cities and towns are being forced to make drastic cuts in their budgets sometimes slashing funding which would go towards police, fire and other services to ensure our safety and prevent crime in our communities. Even Governor Rell's budget two weeks ago detailed cuts to resident trooper programs, which in some towns especially in my district is the sole police presence. This measure would provide needed revenue to fund necessary services that the residents of these communities have come to expect.

As legislators, I believe it is our responsibility to provide every opportunity we can to help the towns we represent offset the cost of government. This proposal is a small but effective step towards fulfilling that duty. Thank you again for your time. I appreciate your thorough contemplation of this request. I look forward to further discussion of this matter in a public forum.