



TOWN OF CANTERBURY  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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Testimony by Brian H. Sear, Canterbury First Selectman

Planning & Development Committee

March 10, 2010 RE: HB 5255 + HB 5031

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I began serving as Canterbury First Selectman in November 2007, just before the economic situation began to collapse. Within a very short time, it became apparent that the main challenge facing our Town would be maintaining services with little or no tax increases in an environment where cuts in municipal aid would be a very real possibility. This challenge has remained for my 2+ years in office.

I applaud the committee for considering removing obstacles that will free up funds for our Towns' bottom lines, such as permitting electronic posting of reports, removing the obligation of removing and storing personal possessions of evicted tenants, allowing legal notices to be posted on the internet, allowing Towns to reject arbitration awards and adjusting the prevailing wage. I see this as the very beginning of a process that can yield significant benefits without negative consequences.

I am most encouraged by indications that sharing of services between towns and within regions and the state will be supported. "Regionalism" is viewed with suspicion by many parties who feel it will erode our Town's unique characters. I think that, approached correctly, it will serve to accomplish just the opposite. Sharing services that are common to Towns will free them to concentrate on their own specific needs.

I served on the MORE subcommittee on Town Functions, and learned about many efforts Towns are already making to increase efficiencies and help their bottom line. Throughout the process I came to realize that a broad-brush approach to regionalism would not work, and could even be harmful. It became clear to me that a successful policy at the local and state level should be:

Let's **Protect** activities that are unique to Towns, and **Support** activities that are common among Towns.

There should be some sharing of benefits for those who increase the effectiveness and efficiency of shared support services, which can be funneled back for use for Towns to apply to their own unique needs. This would move "regionalization" from a forced duty to a mutually beneficial process.

I support all efforts to help promote sharing of services common to Towns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Brian Sear