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I am here to support the legislation being presented today. I am a member of the Princess Pocotopaug community (PPC), of approximately 140 properties, that was developed nearly 50 years ago. One of the purposes was to provide property owners in this community to have local access to Lake Pocotopaug. The Princess Pocotopaug community owns 2 beaches, 2 boat launches and a community building. The PPC gives permission to members in good standing the opportunity to install a dock for approximately 20 boats, and a waiting list is maintained. Later it was voted to be a special tax district and has operated as such for more than 20 years. In the past year, we found out that we were not in compliance with the collection of tax under state statute, because we collected a flat tax rate from all property owners. Upon this realization, we hired legal counsel and held special meetings with the general membership to determine what the best course of action would be. It was agreed that we should proceed to continue with a flat tax, if possible. Therefore, we appreciate Representative Hamm's assistance in presenting this proposal to you on our behalf.

The reason the flat tax is appropriate for this tax district is that there are approximately 25 properties that are waterfront properties and the assessed value of those properties represents approximately 70% of the total value of all assessed property values in this Community. Therefore, if the assessment were to follow the town of East Hampton's assessment, as the current legislation states, then the 25 property owners would pay for 70% of the district's operating expenses. However, those waterfront properties are not the individuals who need access to the lake, because they have direct access from their property. It is the 110 other property owners who benefit the most from the community properties. They can walk down the street to one of the community properties and go for a swim, launch a boat, and approximately 20 non-waterfront members have boats docked at two of the community properties. This is a benefit which enhances the value of each property in the community. If the proposed legislation is not passed the waterfront property owners would double or triple their tax and the non-waterfront properties would: increase, decrease or stay relatively the same, dependent upon the status of the property. The current assessments in this community range from approximately \$25,000 – \$481,000. The community tax for waterfront properties may increase from \$200 per year to approximately \$300- \$800 per year. For non-waterfront properties the tax ranges will be approximately \$50 - \$380 .

My concern is that if this legislation does not pass, the property owners with a significant increase in tax may determine that the benefit of the community properties is not worth the additional tax and may vote to dissolve the community tax district. This would result in transferring the property to the town or selling the community properties, and then try to determine an appropriate method to disburse the proceeds to the members. The result being that approximately 110 property owners, without direct waterfront property, would not have local access to the lake, they would have to drive approximately 3 miles to the town park, which is an alternative, however I believe that would impair the value of the properties , cause legal issues and negative feelings amongst neighbors. The original founders of the community and the current and past Officers and Directors of the PPC have devoted thousands of hours over the years to maintain the community for the benefit of all. I would hate to see that lost over a technicality of tax assessments.

I urge you to consider passing this proposal with an implementation date of July 1, 2010. The implementation date should coincide with our tax year, which is the same as the State and local municipality's tax year.

Thank you for your consideration

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