



**Testimony
Bart Russell, Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Presented to the Environment Committee
Of the Connecticut General Assembly
January 31, 2011**

**RE: SB-833, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SITING OF CERTAIN
TELECOMMUNICATION TOWER APPLICATIONS**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) *strongly supports* SB-833, An Act Concerning the Siting of Certain Telecommunication Tower Applications.

This bill will give Connecticut's towns and cities some much-needed control in where to site certain telecommunications towers that are within 250 feet of a school, home or church. As the demand for wireless technologies grows, small towns and cities are increasingly faced with efforts to place telecommunications towers in areas that don't make sense for the town or its residents because of environmental, ecological or aesthetic concerns. Many towns have spent countless hours crafting zoning and land use regulations to control building and growth in their towns to protect neighborhoods, natural resources, historic districts, etc. and while the Siting Council may consider such local regulations, it has free rein to ignore them.

COST understands that the Federal Telecommunications Act has jurisdiction of this area, however, the Act does not limit the ability of towns to make decisions regarding the placement, construction or modification of personal wireless service facilities. In fact, Connecticut is unique in regulating the siting of cell phone towers at the state level, as pointed out in a report by the Office of Legislative Research. (OLR 2008-R-201) Other states do allow local governments to make siting decisions concerning telecommunications and have not been found to be in conflict with the federal law. This would be a more balanced approach because the federal law ensures that towns could not simply adopt zoning laws that have the effect of prohibiting the provision of wireless services or unreasonably discriminating among providers of functionally equivalent services.

We therefore urge your support for SB-833, which recognizes that towns should have the authority to make decisions regarding the siting of telecommunications towers, which is consistent with other state laws which vest authority for land use decisions in local governments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.