



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE WHIT BETTS
SEVENTY-EIGHTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 4200
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700
Whit.Betts@housegop.ct.gov

MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING
SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Planning and Development Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
February 14, 2011

Good Morning Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, Senator Coleman, Representative Grogins, Senator Fasano, Representative Aman, and Planning and Development Committee Membership:

I am here today to submit testimony on **House Bill 5256 Act Concerning Receipt By Electronic Mail of Municipal Tax Bills**. I submitted this proposal at the request of Bristol local officials who are looking for ways to reduce their operating expenses. The idea of replacing the mailing of tax bills – on a voluntary basis – by e-mailing tax bills to taxpayers is appealing on several levels and makes a lot of sense.

First, the elimination of postage, printing, paper, envelopes and other administrative costs of tax bills will result in substantial savings for towns and municipalities. Leonello, CFO of Quality Data Service, recently informed me that about 4,000,000 real estate, motor vehicle, and personal property tax bills are mailed annually. Excluding all other expenses the postage cost for mailing these bills is approximately \$1,600,000. Even though towns are able to get reduced postage at \$.40 we know that prices for postage will be increasing shortly, thereby increasing postage expenses.

If 33% of the taxpayers sign up for the e-mails, towns will save over \$500,000 on postage alone. Of course the savings can and will be higher if more taxpayers switch to receiving their tax bills via e-mail.

Second, the software for instituting this program exists now, and safeguards are in place to ensure there are repeated and secure verifications of e-mail addresses. Third, Massachusetts now e-mails tax bills to taxpayers, and information is available to attest to the success of this program. Fourth, e-mail is being used by the IRS and taxpayers in the filing of income tax returns, and based on their experience it seems only logical to apply this technology to the local level.

Given the critical need for everyone to reduce expenses, this idea seems timely and clearly will result in substantial savings for both municipalities and ultimately our taxpayers. I ask for your support and vote to act favorably on moving this proposal forward for consideration by the full legislature. Thank you for allowing me to speak on this bill today.