



Testimony
Bart Russell, Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST)
Before the Environment Committee
March 16, 2012

RE: OPPOSE – SB-349, AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING FOR INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION MEMBERS AND AGENTS.

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) *opposes* SB-349, which requires members of local Inland Wetlands Commissions complete a basic training course.

Under current law, only one member of the inland wetlands agency or staff of the agency must complete the comprehensive training program developed by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) pursuant to section 22a-39. The provisions of the training program, however, must be summarized and presented to the other members of the commission at least once annually. Although we appreciate that the requirements in the bill are less onerous than last year's bill, we continue to have concerns that a mandatory training requirement would be burdensome and discourage volunteers from serving on the commission.

Members of inland wetlands commissions volunteer countless hours to serve their town because commissions generally meet often and hold lengthy meetings and public hearings throughout the year. As a result, many small towns struggle to fill vacancies on town boards and commissions such as Inland Wetlands. Under current law, individuals who would like to obtain training may do so, either from DEP or through other relevant seminars or coursework. This strikes an appropriate balance between ensuring that service on the commission is not overly burdensome and that individuals have access to appropriate training.