MAYOR
MICHAEL A. PAVIA

STAMFORD GOVERNMENT CENTER
888 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD
P.O. BOX 10152
STAMFORD, CT 06904-2152

Tel: (203) 977-4150
Fax: (203) 977-5845
Email: mpavia@ci.stamford.ct.us

CITY OF STAMFORD
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

March 12, 2012

Sen. Eileen Daly
Rep. Patricia Widlitz
Co-Chairs, Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee
Room 3700, Legislative Office Bldg.
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Raised Bill No. 5424 - Revaluation for Certain Towns

Dear Senator Daly, Representative Widlitz and distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

My name is Michael Pavia and I am the Mayor of the City of Stamford. I am here today to respectfully urge your support for bill 5424, allowing the postponement of revaluation for the City of Stamford and several other municipalities in Connecticut.

As Mayor of the City of Stamford, I am keenly aware of the financial hardships that many of the City's residents and business owners are facing. The negative impact of economic recession has resulted in job losses, foreclosures, and a rising cost of living instilling APPREHENSION and uncertainty into the lives of many of our citizens.

As Mayor of Stamford, I am very fortunate to have a very diverse property base. That has not spared Stamford from the national recession that has affected Stamford's economy and all sectors of our real estate market. Property values have DECLINED to levels not witnessed in over five years. Millions, and perhaps billions, of dollars in equity have been erased from the real estate market. Rental rates have decreased. Vacancy rates are on the rise. Foreclosures are at unprecedented levels and continue to threaten more homeowners as they struggle to keep their homes and investments.

Across the country, citizens are voicing their concerns over increasing taxes and decreasing property values. As a result, there is a renewed commitment to curb excessive and unnecessary spending in municipal government.

Locally, Stamford is beginning to see early signs of recovery; new office buildings and apartment buildings are being developed in our South End and parts of the downtown. We are witnessing some stabilization in commercial rental rates, as well. Many retail stores and restaurants in our Central Business District are reporting a modest improvement in business. Yet, serious challenges remain.

Some experts believe that we are in the initial stages of a 12 to 24 month stabilization period in lower Fairfield County. Typically, such periods are accompanied by sluggish and unsteady real estate sales and leasing activity. Restoring confidence among buyers, sellers, tenants, landlords, and lenders can be a stubborn and frustratingly slow process.

Faced with the current market conditions and with the reality that stabilization is in its infancy, I am convinced that Stamford has a legitimate need to postpone its upcoming 2012 revaluation. City experts, along with other local professionals, have reported that values for commercial and industrial properties have fallen at higher rates than those of residential properties since our last revaluation.

As such, a revaluation in 2012 would be statistically skewed, in my opinion, and would adversely impact residents and small business owners in Stamford. With residential property values on firmer footing than those of commercial/industrial properties, Stamford would likely witness a shift in the property tax burden. Such a shift would bring additional financial STRESS to many of our homeowners and could possibly stifle our nascent economic recovery.

I am of the firm belief that it is wise to postpone our upcoming revaluation to October 2013, permitting market conditions to more fully stabilize and averting more pain for local homeowners and taxpayers.

While Stamford's situation may be different from other municipalities, what I and other mayors have in common is that we have the best grasp of the property market and the impact that revaluations have across all sectors of our cities and towns. We know that we must continue to balance our budgets, provide service levels that our residents expect and continue to attract businesses with an equitable property tax base.

Property taxes are the key revenue base for municipalities. By postponing this year's revaluation you are allowing us flexibility in setting the tax base of each of our cities, which is a very critical tool for any Mayor.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Pavia
Mayor

2011 Grand List Details:

Residential Units, Condos & Vacant Land:	34,283
Commercial, Industrial, Public Utilities, Apartments:	2,870
Total Parcel Count:	37,153

Total Grand List (2011)

Residential & Condo Units:	14,474,841,396	58.83%
Commercial (Office/Condo/Apt):	8,136,728,701	33.07%
Personal Property:	1,149,342,334	4.67%
Motor Vehicles:	845,654,699	3.43%
Total Grand List Including Exemptions:	24,606,567,130	100.00%
Total Exemptions:	304,296,805	
Total Net Taxable Grand List (2011):	**24,302,270,325**	

DECREASE/INCREASE IN GRAND LIST-REVAL YEARS 2010 & 2011

TOWN	REVAL YR.	DECREASE	DECREASE %	INCREASE %
ASHFORD	2011		14.00%	
BEACON FALLS	2011	68,922,523	12.75%	
BRIDGEWATER	2011	30,036,373	7.70%	
BROOKFIELD	2011		17.00%	
CLINTON	2010	160,550,155	9.80%	
COLUMBIA	2011	70,494,517	13.19%	
CORNWALL	2011		13.50%	
DURHAM	2011		8.00%	
EAST HARTFORD	2011		12.94%	
EAST HAVEN	2011		14.50%	
EAST LYME	2011		12.10%	
EASTON	2011	353,083,974	21.00%	
ENFIELD	2011	3,758,520	13.00%	
FAIRFIELD	2010		10.60%	
GREENWICH	2010	3,939,209,895	21.90%	
GRISWOLD	2011		17.00%	
GROTON	2011	145,942,222	3.70%	
HAMDEN	2010		7.50%	
HEBRON	2011	99,588,090	12.96%	
LISBON	2011		9.60%	
MANCHESTER	2011	385,189,168	9.00%	
MARLBOROUGH	2011	61,500,000	9.81%	
MERIDEN	2011		12.00%	
MIDDLEBURY	2010		17.00%	
MIDDLEFIELD	2011		10.03%	
MONTVILLE	2011		20.00%	
NEW HAVEN	Based on 2007 Phase-In (frozen) with a revaluation in 2011, there was a 16.7% INCREASE			
	However, from the 2010 Grand List to the 2011 Revalualtion year, there was an 8.33% decrease			
NEW MILFORD	2010		6.50%	
NEWINGTON	2011	115,000	4.30%	
PORTLAND	2011		6.60%	
PROSPECT	2011		5.90%	
PLYMOUTH	2011	66,446,978	8.06%	
RIDGEFIELD	(Ridgefield expects to go down 20-30% their revaluation year {2012})		15.00%	(Non-Revaluation Year)
SALEM	2011		17.00%	
SALISBURY	2010		4.50%	
SEYMOUR	2011		13.00%	
SHELTON	2011	768,889,185	14.40%	
STONINGTON	2011		15.88%	
THOMASTON	2011	85,000,000	16.00%	
TRUMBULL	2011	770,784,758	14.79%	
WESTBROOK	2011		15.00%	
WEST HARTFORD	2011		6.10%	
WESTPORT	2010	1,356,253,358	12.40%	
WOODSTOCK	2011		18.00%	