



PEDRO E. SEGARRA
MAYOR

**Testimony by Mayor Pedro E. Segarra
City of Hartford
Senate Bill 399**

**An Act Concerning Annual Adjustments to Assessment Rates Adopted for Apartment and Residential Properties
March 16, 2012, 10:30AM in Hearing Room 2E**

Co-Chairwomen Daily and Widlitz, Ranking Members Roraback and Williams, Vice-Chairmen Fonfara and Wright and Distinguished Members of the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on Senate Bill 399. I apologize for not being able to present verbal testimony today as I am instead meeting with the Police Department, Management and Budget and Registrar of Voters offices to discuss their proposed Fiscal Year 12-13 budgets.

I first want to thank the Finance Co-Chairwomen, Senator Daily and Representative Wildlitz, for your patience and understanding as the City of Hartford works with all stakeholders, most notably residents, neighborhood organizations and the Metro Hartford Alliance, to return balance and equity to its property tax system. Since the 1960's Hartford has been treated differently than the other 168 cities and towns – I remain steadfastly committed to righting the system in a responsible manner that encourages accountability, fiscal restraint and innovation.

I also want to thank State Senator John Fonfara, State Representative Matt Ritter, and the rest of the Hartford delegation for their commitment to this effort. Their willingness to engage strategic partners, consider viable and creative alternatives and focus on developing a solution that carefully balances the needs of the corporate and commercial sector with a growing residential and renter class has both impressed and motivated me throughout.

While we agree with the Metro Hartford Alliance on a great many components, including a minimum floor of 30% on the residential class (a significant increase from previous years), an immediate move to 60% on apartments and four-family dwellings, and, as agreed to last year, an elimination of the corporate surcharge, which creates an automatic \$12 million structural deficit for the FY 12-13 budget, there are a few minor elements that require additional discussion and consideration. We recognize and appreciate the Alliance's willingness to consider alternations to Sections (d) and (e) and I remain confident that in the coming weeks we will quickly come to agreement on these two sections; one that appropriately balances growth in the commercial sector with potential resulting impacts on the residential class. We are also grateful that the Alliance has agreed to changes in Section (f) so that any public referendum more appropriately conforms to the City's budget calendar. That said, an additional modification is required here to ensure full compliance with Chapter X of the City Charter.

Again, the City of Hartford remains grateful to the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee for your willingness to work with City leadership, the legislative delegation and the Metro Hartford Alliance over the last two sessions to reach a fair and balanced resolution to this more than three decade old problem. While additional hurdles remain, I am optimistic that – working together – we can reach a resolution that meets the aims of all property classes and brings stability and predictability to those who wish to live and invest in Connecticut's Capital City.

The City of Hartford respectfully urges favorable consideration of this incredibly important bill, which will thereby allow for needed time to discuss, deliberate and consider viable and realistic alternatives to the sections noted above.

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