



WINDHAM REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Chaplin Columbia Coventry Hampton Lebanon Mansfield Scotland Willington Windham

Chairman Fonfara
Chairman Widlitz
Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

March 4, 2013

RE: Testimony for **SB 843 and other Bills to Implement the Governors Budget.**

Dear Chairman Fonfara and Chairman Widlitz,
and members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

The Windham Region Council of Governments (WINCOG) is writing **to express it's deepest concerns regarding the Governors Proposed Budget.** We specifically have concerns with the following proposals:

We have extreme reservations regarding the proposed **elimination of the Car Tax**. Unless this legislation is adjusted to make up for the significant shortfall in revenue to our municipalities, we are strongly against this proposal. Current projections from our 9 WINCOG towns indicate a **2 to 3% mil increase in property taxes** will occur if this bill is passed.

WINCOG has grave concerns about the **elimination of Pilot Funds** and consider this an inequitable arrangement, as our educational budgets (which do need additional funding) gain and our municipal side of the financial ledger losers. One more **municipal** revenue source eliminated!

The recommended elimination of the DSS portion of **Transportation to Work Funding** will have a devastating effect on our regional workforce efforts. This cut would jeopardize over 400 Eastern CT jobs annually (115 using bus; 73 van/taxi; 87 mileage assistance; 141 car-based help) and these are conservative given the slow economy.

We do wish to acknowledge that we **support the Governors Natural Gas Initiative** and are looking at ways here in Eastern CT to take advantage of this proposal. We also applaud the legislator's efforts over the last few sessions to address the needed educational issues and funding inequities. We will continue to work with you to address this most needed reform.

In Summary, we cannot continue down the same road of transferring the **fiscal burden of the state to the inequitable property tax system**. It is finally time to **stop treating the "symptoms" of the property tax and address the real "disease" of the property tax.** **Until we all agree to take this initiative, we will continue to face the same fiscal realities year in and year out!**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark N. Paquette
Executive Director, WINCOG

cc: WINCOG Board of Directors
Eastern CT Legislators
John Beauregard, EWIB