

WINDHAM REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Chaplin Columbia Coventry Hampton Lebanon Mansfield Scotland Willington Windham

Chairman Cassano
Chairman Rojas
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

March 18, 2013

RE: Testimony for **HB 6629 An Act Establishing Regionalism in CT**

Dear Chairman Cassano and Chairman Rojas,
and members of the Planning and Development Committee,

The Windham Region Council of Governments (WINCOG) is submitting the following testimony regarding **Bill # 6629**:

- WINCOG applauds the Planning and Development Committee for **taking the initiative to give finality** to the issue of COG's and regional boundaries. **BUT**, you must either pass some legislation (the current suggested county boundaries may not be the answer, see attached map) or leave the current structure alone and let us get on with doing our business. Mergers, Boundary Studies, etc have gone on for more than 4 years now. We cannot continue to live under this cloud of uncertainty.
- We also support the new financial formula of funding the 8 COG's with a base of \$200,000 and \$1.00 per capita. This would certainly create sustainability amongst the COG's.
- WINCOG does not support, and is **greatly disappointed that pilot studies will be funded** directly under this legislation. It was you the legislature that created the RPIP program and made it available to **all RPO's** on a competitive basis for studies just like this. Why would we undertake any pilot studies, before the 8 COGs are formed and come into existence? In addition, the RPIP Program was recently reduced by \$7.5 million dollars and the RPO's were told by OPM that there were very limited funds available for the next round of RPIP Grants. And now we give out \$ 500,000 by July 1, 2013 to a selected few COGs! What message does this send!

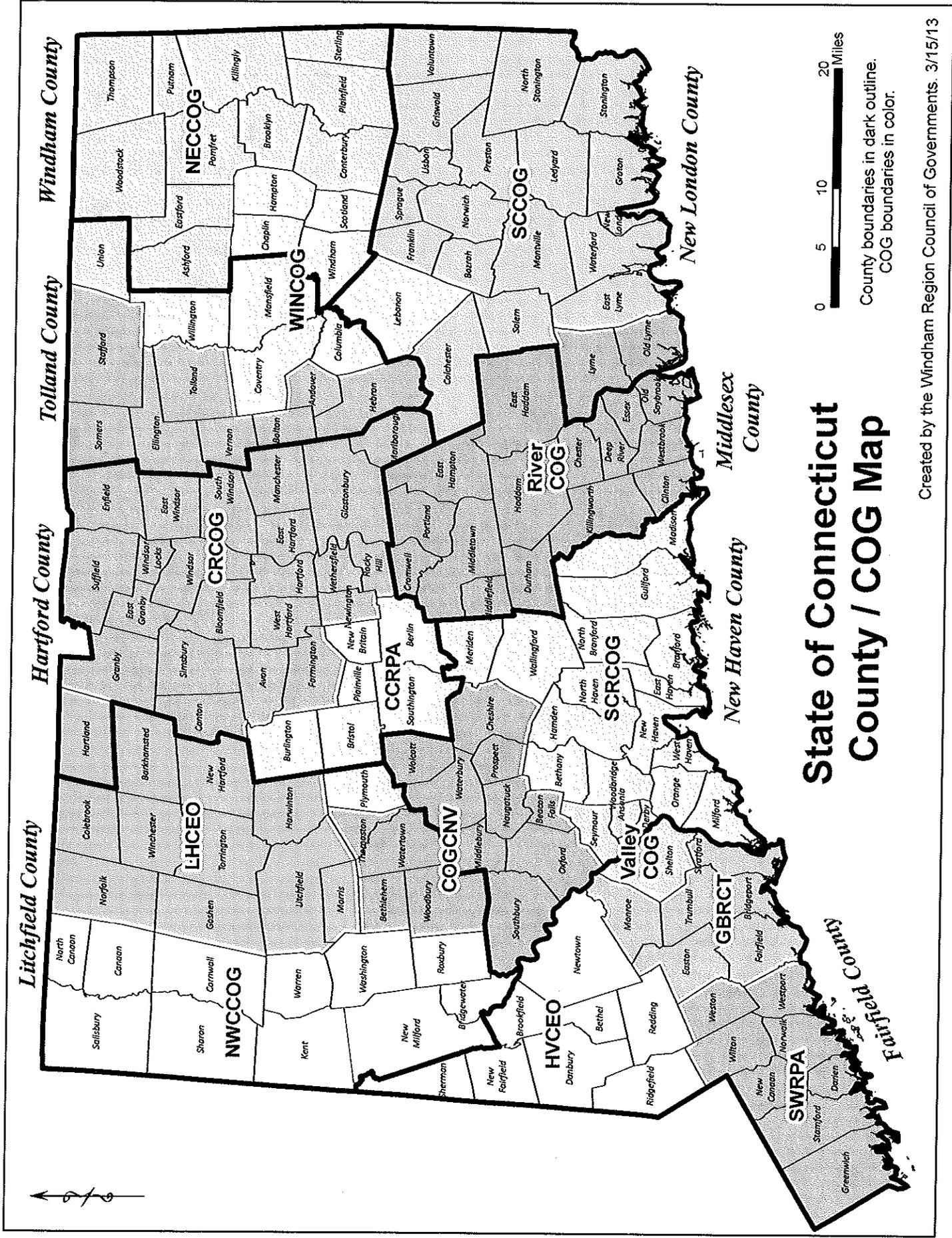
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark N. Paquette
Executive Director, WINCOG

cc: WINCOG Board of Directors
Eastern CT Legislators

Atch: COG/County Map



State of Connecticut County / COG Map

County boundaries in dark outline.
COG boundaries in color.

Created by the Windham Region Council of Governments. 3/15/13