



**Testimony of
Betsy Gara
Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the
Planning & Development Committee
March 1, 2013**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) *opposes* SB- 961 - AN ACT
**CONCERNING THE ASSESSMENT OF LIVESTOCK AND FARM MACHINERY AND
THE TRANSFER OF LAND CLASSIFIED AS FARM LAND, OPEN SPACE LAND,
FOREST LAND AND MARITIME HERITAGE LAND**

We appreciate that this year's proposal provides towns with the *option* of exempting horses from the property tax rather than mandating such exemption. It is important to note, however, that according to the fiscal note on last year's bill, exempting horses and ponies could result in a reduction to a municipality's grand list. The statewide 2010 Grand List included 1,902 horses and ponies valued at more than \$1,000 and total assessed value at \$6.6 million. We would therefore oppose any effort to mandate the exemption.

COST continues to have concerns with Section 2 of the bill which increases the property tax exemption for farm machinery by requiring a town to exempt up to \$100,000 of the assessed value of farm equipment rather than actual value.

According to the Office of Fiscal Analysis, this provision would result in reductions to a municipality's grand list, particularly in rural communities. COST therefore opposes this section of the bill.