



TESTIMONY
BARBARA HENRY
PAST PRESIDENT
COUNCIL OF SMALL TOWNS
BEFORE THE
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MARCH 1, 2013

RE: HB-5719 AN ACT PERMITTING MUNICIPALITIES TO SHARE RESIDENT STATE TROOPERS

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) strongly supports HB-5719 which would require the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to develop a program to permit towns to share a resident state trooper.

In 2011, the state legislature increased from 70% to 100% the amount towns are required to reimburse the state for Resident State Trooper overtime costs. As a result, small towns are exploring ways to reduce costs associated with the state's Resident State Trooper program while maintaining critical public safety services.

COST members are reviewing options for: 1) Sharing Resident State Troopers between two more trooper only towns, including towns that do not share a geographic border; and 2) Providing supervision of a regional police department or constabulary that includes two or more Resident Trooper Towns.

Section 29-5 of the Connecticut General Statutes authorizes the appointment of resident state troopers "in any town or two or more *adjoining* towns lacking an organized police force." Unfortunately, towns that have explored this option have encountered certain obstacles. COST representatives met with DESPP last year to discuss this issue and were advised that "there are potential liability and labor concerns that would warrant careful consideration by the Attorney General's Office and our agency's administration before such an arrangement could be established."

It is our understanding that some towns did request clarification of these issues from Attorney General Blumenthal's office but did not receive such clarification and have since decided not to pursue this option. Given the ongoing budget pressure on towns, assisting towns in developing a program to share resident state troopers would be very helpful. In addition, this option should be available for towns regardless of whether they share a geographic border so we would support the deletion of the word "adjoining" from the statute.

COST urges the Public Safety Committee to support HB-5719 to assist towns in addressing existing obstacles to opportunities to share resident state troopers.