

# CCM 2013 Testimony

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## ***TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE***

March 8, 2013

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 92% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

***CCM supports: Senate Bill 849 An Act Concerning Local Bridge Program Reform and Establishing a Local Transportation Capital Program.***

The creation of a Local Transportation Capital Program would provide state funding in the form of tax obligation bonds in lieu of specific federal funding to municipalities and local planning agencies for eligible transportation improvements to any state or locally maintained road or facility. The goal of this program is to speed up the current process by which local projects eligible for federal funding are approved and receive those funds.

SB 849 would streamline that process by providing local municipalities and planning agencies with direct funding from the state DOT, which would then seek reimbursement from the Federal Highway Administration. Additionally Sec. 1 (e), would remove projects on locally owned roads or to locally owned facilities from being classified as a proposed state action or critical activity. CCM supports this language as it would remove the proposed projects from certain flood plain and flood management guidelines under CGS 25-68b to 25-68h. This would accelerate the approval, start and completion of necessary transportation improvements.

CCM opposes, Sec. 1 (d) as drafted because it would require that any transportation improvement funded through this program have a service life of approximately twenty years which appears to be more restrictive than current practice.

Sec.1 (c) would require DOT to accept applications from regional planning agencies and provide funding to the approved recipients through guidelines approved by DOT. CCM is aware that these guidelines have not yet been established, and requests that DOT offer municipalities the chance to comment and review any proposed guidelines before final approval.

CCM has long supported the Local Bridge Program and is happy to support Section 3 of SB 849. This would change the existing local bridge program from a loan program to a grant, and would increase the percentage of a project that may be funded under this program from the current range of 10%-33% to 15%-50%. The bill would also reduce various administrative regulations that add additional costs and increase the time needed to begin and thus complete a local bridge project.

SB 849 provides the changes to allow for the effective use of \$15 million in proposed bonding for the Local Bridge Program which has been critically underfunded for years and allowed many local bridges to fall into a state of disrepair. This bill would infuse needed capital into this program.

CCM supports SB 849 and urges the Committee to favorably report it.

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If you have any questions, please contact M. Randall Collins Jr., Senior Legislative Associate for CCM  
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