



CCM 2013 Testimony

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ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

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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 opposes Section 1 of HB 6653 "An Act Concerning Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Regulatory Streamlining to Assist Municipalities."

Contrary to the title of this bill, **Section 1 would impose a significant and costly new mandate on local governments** by requiring local plans of conservation and development to be consistent with the state plan and be subjected to the review and approval by the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection.

The approach to plans of conservation and development in Connecticut has focused on a "bottom-up" approach, similar to the successful New Jersey process. This proposal would turn this tried and true process upside down.

As often pointed out by CCM, a one size fits all approach does not work. Municipalities come in all shapes and sizes with different constituencies, needs and goals. We cannot assume that what works in one community will work in another.

Updating local plans of conservation and development is an expensive enterprise, often costing in excess of six figures to update. This proposal would mean every time the state makes a modification to its plan 169 towns and cities across the state will have to again undergo this costly process.

Towns and cities are currently facing the potential for significant state aid reductions, based on the current proposed budget, which would cut at least \$128 million in general (unrestricted) municipal aid and \$700 million in motor vehicle property tax revenue. The state budget proposal would also eliminate three out of four PILOT programs.

Section 1 of this bill would further exacerbate the fiscal demands on local governments, on top of shrinking state aid and rising property taxes.

CCM urges the Committee to **oppose Section 1** of the bill before taking any action.



If you have any questions, please contact Kachina Walsh-Weaver, State Relations Manager for CCM via email kwalsh-weaver@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 710-9525.