



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Testimony of
Karen K. Buffkin, Deputy Secretary
Office of Policy and Management
Before the Appropriations Committee
February 11, 2014

Good morning Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Karen K. Buffkin and I am here today to discuss the Governor's recommended FY 2015 adjusted budget for the Office of Policy and Management (OPM).

OPM's recommended adjusted general fund budget of \$278.5 million is \$35.7 million, or 14.7%, more than the FY 2015 appropriation of \$242.8 million. The net increase primarily relates to adjustments to the Tax Relief for Elderly Renters program and the PILOT for Private Tax-Exempt Property, increases of \$28.4 and \$8 million, respectively.

Regarding the Tax Relief for Elderly Renters program, the Governor recommends transferring the administration of the program back from the Department of Housing to OPM and reopening the program to new applicants. The current services budget is \$21.9 million. Last session, the program was closed to any new applicants. Approximately \$6.5 million has been added to the budget to reopen the program, bringing the total recommended budget to \$28.4 million in FY 2015. This expansion will allow an additional 12,700 citizens to apply for a renters rebate.

Regarding the payment in lieu of taxes for private tax-exempt property, the Governor recommends increasing the reimbursement to municipalities by \$8 million per year from \$115.4 to \$123.4 million. Annual funding for this program has been fixed at \$115.4 million since FY 2010.

OPM's recommended adjusted insurance fund budget of \$494.4 thousand is \$28.2 thousand more than the FY 2015 appropriation of \$466.2 thousand. \$26.6 thousand of the increase reflects updated fringe benefit rates. There are no recommended changes to the Mashantucket Pequot and Mohegan fund FY 2015 appropriated budget of \$61.8 million.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My staff and I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.