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SB-94, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PUBLICATION OF MUNICIPAL LEGAL NOTICES IN NEWSPAPERS

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) strongly ***supports SB-94***, which allows towns to post legal notices on their websites with a brief summary of the matter in a local newspaper.

Towns are required by law to publish numerous legal notices in newspapers. Unfortunately, advertising prices have increased dramatically, placing a fiscal burden on Connecticut's small towns. In addition, many small town newspapers have gone out of business, requiring towns to publish notices in the more expensive metropolitan newspapers. Input from our small towns indicates that towns spend from $5,000 - $25,000 each year to publish legal notices in newspapers.

Increasingly, taxpayers go to their municipal websites to find up-to-date information on issues affecting towns, including legal notices. Recognizing that consumers are more likely to receive information online than in newspapers, last year, lawmakers approved legislation allowing *state agencies* to post certain legal notices online. For example, Public Act 13-205 allows the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner, under certain circumstances, to publicly notice a tentative determination for a permit on its website rather than in a newspaper.

For the vast majority of people, posting legal notices on the Internet will allow greater access to this information. For those without internet access, they will still be alerted to legal notices through a brief summary of the information that will be posted in newspapers. Accordingly, allowing towns with the staff and Internet capabilities to post such notices on their websites will help reduce their fiscal burden while ensuring that the public has access to such notices.

COST therefore **supports SB-94** which will allow municipalities to publish a brief summary of a matter being noticed in a newspaper with a reference to the municipality's web site for additional information in lieu of publication of a full legal notice.

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