



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

*TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
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Testimony Regarding Governor's Bill No. 5055
An Act Eliminating Municipal Mandates

Good morning Senator Osten, Representative Rojas, and members of the Planning and Development Committee. I am Gian-Carl Casa, Undersecretary for Legislative Affairs at the Office of Policy and Management. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Governor's Bill 5055, "An Act Eliminating Municipal Mandates".

As the committee of cognizance for legislation involving local governments you know better than most the ways in which state mandates can drive up local costs or create administrative burdens for town and city governments. Governor's Bill 5055 seeks to provide relief from three of those requirements.

This bill would (a) eliminate the mandate that municipalities pay for the Department of Motor Vehicles' service that blocks motor vehicle registrations for people with delinquent property taxes, (b) allow municipalities to delay implementation of scheduled revaluations, and (c) repeal a needless reporting requirement concerning cellular antennas.

Assessment for DMV Program

For many years the Department of Motor Vehicles has assisted with the collection of millions of dollars in property taxes by blocking the registration or renewal of registrations of motor vehicles by people who are delinquent in payment of property taxes. In 2004 the State began assessing local governments for this service. This year the assessment costs towns approximately \$870,000.

The Governor's proposal would end that assessment, effective 7/1/15. One level of government should not charge another for this type of assistance. This proposal is consistent with another by the Governor which would provide almost \$9 million in mandates relief to local governments by exempting them from the health insurance premium tax (that is in Governor's Bill 28).

Governor's Bill 5055 would also help citizens. Sometimes the reporting to DMV by municipalities is not as regular as it might be, resulting in DMV refusing to register the vehicles owned by people who had paid their property taxes since the last time the municipality reported. This results in inconvenience and frustration for the affected citizens, who must go back to their town, obtain proof they had paid their property taxes and return to DMV. This bill would allow DMV to suspend the service for municipalities that do not file their list of delinquents by the first of each

month. Keeping DMV's information as up-to-date as possible will minimize disruptions for our tax-paying citizens -- and shorten lines at DMV for people who are there for other reasons.

The bill strikes a balance: saving almost a million dollars for municipalities and reducing inconvenience to the public.

Revaluation Relief

Connecticut, like the rest of the country, continues to recover slowly from the recession of 2008, with many impacts. One is the ongoing volatility of the housing market. While the economy is recovering, it is not back yet. Because of this it makes sense to allow municipalities to delay implementation of revaluations until housing values have better stabilized. This bill would allow municipalities that perceive such a problem in their communities to delay implementation of revaluations for up to two years.

There is a drafting error in the bill before you, however. **The intention of the proposal is to allow municipalities to delay implementation in FY 15 for revaluations of the October 2013 grand lists.** We also believe the law should be effective on passage, so towns that so choose can move quickly to provide relief in their FY 15 property tax bills.

We apologize for the confusion and will submit new language to the committee as soon as possible.

Administrative Relief

Current law requires municipalities to annually report to the CT Siting Council the location, type and height concerning cellular antennae and towers in their communities. The intention of the requirement was good - to give the Siting Council a full picture of all cellular and tower coverage. However, local officials state that they comply with the requirement by looking at the Siting Council's website, noting the information there and reporting it back to the Siting Council.

Clearly, that is unnecessary. The Governor proposes to eliminate the requirement.

We look forward to working with you to correct the language in the bill regarding revaluations, and ask that you amend and favorably report Governor's Bill 5055.

Thank you for your consideration.