



**Testimony  
Kathryn Dube  
Connecticut Council of Small Towns  
Before the Planning & Development Committee  
March 21, 2014**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) strongly *supports* HB-5580 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PESTICIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL, THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PRIMARY SERVICE AREA TASK FORCE AND THE ELIMINATION OF A MUNICIPAL MANDATE.

Connecticut's small towns continue to face enormous pressure to hold the line on local budget and property tax increases. Through this bill we can act now to relieve some of the burden on our small towns and cities by addressing their concerns with these costly unfunded mandates.

1. *To review pesticides for safety and effectiveness and report such findings; to require the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection (1) to establish a regional program through which municipalities may purchase pesticides, and (2) determine whether to create an integrated pest management internet web site*

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) continues to hear concerns from many towns throughout the state that are having difficulty maintaining their athletic fields and school grounds as a result of the 2010 ban on the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plans. Communities remain committed to the importance of protecting the health and safety of our children; however they struggle to find the most effective ways to manage their school grounds, parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and municipal greens. Upon the release of the EPA's strategic plan relative to school IPM in 2012, in which the plan concludes that IPM is cost-effective, reduces exposure to pests and pesticides and reduces overall pesticide use, much confusion resulted. Given all of the different and sometimes conflicting studies relative to pesticides, COST strongly *supports* the establishment of a balanced advisory council, which will provide our small towns and cities with the information required to address the use of pesticides and the impacts to health and safety.

**2. To incorporate the recommendations of the Emergency Medical Services Primary Service Area Task Force**

COST supports recommendations #1 through 5 provided in the final report of the Emergency Medical Services Primary Area Task Force. This will provide municipalities with the necessary framework in meeting the public health and safety needs of residents.

Recommendations #1 through 4 of the final report, which received unanimous support by the Task Force, establishes the best practices necessary for emergency services. Recommendation #5 provides municipalities with the ability to make decisions about the selection of their EMS provider and authorizing a municipality to petition DPH for an alternative Primary Service Area Responder (PSAR) if the responder fails to deliver services in accordance with the municipality's local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) plan in addition to failure to meet performance standards. This specific recommendation is a priority to municipalities throughout the state. It is key to ensuring towns are provided with an EMS service that offers the highest level of care that best fit the needs of their individual communities.

The bill also specifies certain timeframes for the state Department of Public Health (DPH) to hold a hearing and make a determination on a petition where unsatisfactory performance is alleged, which will help ensure that municipal concerns are addressed in a timelier manner. DPH's failure to adequately respond to concerns raised in communities regarding the level of service provided by responders must be addressed.

COST also urges your support of recommendations #1 through 5 of the Emergency Medical Services Primary Service Area Task Force.

**3. To permit municipalities to notice the sale, lease or transfer of real property on the Internet web site of such municipality or in a publicly available weekly print publication**

The cost of publishing legal notices in the newspapers has increased significantly. Moreover, many newspapers serving small towns and cities are no longer in business, forcing towns to publish notices in the more expensive metropolitan newspapers. Increasingly, taxpayers go to their municipal websites to find up-to-date information on issues affecting towns, including legal notices. Input from our small towns indicates that towns spend between \$5,000 - \$35,000 each year to publish legal notices in newspapers. COST supports a compromise bill to allow towns to post a summary of the notice in the newspaper directing individuals to the town website for the full notice.

COST urges your support of HB-5580.