

TOWN OF DURHAM

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

LAURA L. FRANCIS



February 20, 2014

Laura L. Francis, First Selectman
Testimony before the Planning and Development Committee

Re: House Bill 5057 "An Act The Assessment of Horses and Ponies and Farm Machinery and the Transfer of Land Classified as Farm, Open Space Land, Forest Land and Marine Heritage Land."

Thank you for the opportunity to address your committee. I urge your support of the provision in HB 5057 that provides enabling language that would allow municipalities the option to exempt horses and ponies of any value from taxation.

I believe there would be support in the Town of Durham to exercise this option if afforded the opportunity. First, there would be minimal effect on our grand list. Most of accounts of this nature meet the value of \$1,000 which is currently exempt but still requires a good deal of time to administer. It is a cumbersome process, with very little gain. Second, while the Assessor is well trained and educated, he would be the first to agree that he is not well qualified to properly assess the value of horses. I believe, is probably the case around the state and could lead to vast inequities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and the opportunity to support the equine community in our town.

Sincerely,

Laura L. Francis