



**Betsy Gara
Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST)
Testimony
Before the Planning & Development Committee
February 21, 2014**

RE: SB-116, AN ACT CONCERNING PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY MAJOR CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES.

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) has concerns about **SB-116**, which authorizes municipalities to abate the real and personal property taxes of any business whose operations are disrupted for at least six months due to certain state or municipal construction projects.

Last year, a similar proposal was amended to *require* municipalities to abate property taxes under these circumstances. While we recognize the concerns facing businesses whose operations have been disrupted by such projects, this could impose a tremendous burden on towns and cities that are undertaking projects to benefit businesses and residents by replacing aging infrastructure to improve public health and safety.

Recognizing the importance of supporting and nurturing the growth of our local businesses, towns work with the state, developers and contractors to try to minimize disruption to local businesses under these types of circumstances. Moreover, under existing law, anyone aggrieved by a property tax assessor's actions can appeal those actions to the town's board of assessment appeals (CGS § 12-111). The decision of the board of assessment appeals may also be appealed to superior court.

COST therefore urges lawmakers to carefully consider the potential impact on municipal revenues in determining whether to amend or approve SB-116.