

To: Public Safety & Security Committee

From: Barbara Henry, First Selectman, Town of Roxbury
Curtis Read, First Selectman, Town of Bridgewater

Date: March 4, 2014

RE: HB-5391, AN ACT CONCERNING OVERTIME AND FRINGE BENEFITS OF RESIDENT STATE TROOPERS.

Thank you for introducing **HB-5391**, which will help smaller communities like Roxbury and Bridgewater maintain critical public safety services. We strongly support this bill.

In 2011, the state legislature increased from 70% to 100% the amount towns are required to reimburse the state for Resident State Trooper overtime costs. Since then, we have also seen a huge increase in the fringe benefit rate we are charged for overtime costs.

In our towns, the fringe benefit rate has increased to 83.25%, making it difficult to manage these costs. Like other towns, Roxbury and Bridgewater were advised of the increase in fringe benefit costs in August, after we adopted our local budget.

Roxbury and Bridgewater are exploring ways to reduce the costs of having a Resident State Trooper and are working with the state to develop a program to share a trooper with one of our neighboring communities. But unless these costs are manageable and predictable, it will make it difficult to sustain this program.

In the long run, the state will not save money by shifting more of the cost burden onto municipalities. Towns that are forced to give up the Resident State Trooper program must be provided with public safety services from state troopers.

Clearly, it is in the best interest of our residents and our state as whole, if towns can maintain their Resident State Trooper programs. HB-5391 will help us do that by making sure that costs are manageable.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of HB-5391.