

CCM 2014 Testimony

900 CHAPEL STREET, 9th FLOOR, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510-2807 PHONE (203) 498-3000 FAX (203) 562-6314

Your source for local government management information www.ccm-ct.org

PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE

February 18, 2014

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 92% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

CCM *opposes* SB 103 "An Act Concerning Compliance With Fire Department Apparatus Maintenance Standards" which would mandate that all fire apparatus be inspected and maintained to particular standards. In addition, SB 103 would implement particular liability, negligence and immunity provisions which are onerous to towns and cities. Although well intentioned, this proposal would be an unfunded mandate on municipalities and local volunteer fire departments that may not have the resources to effectively comply.

Municipal officials appreciate the work and sacrifice those in the fire service make in serving our communities. Many towns and cities work to ensure that all municipal vehicles are maintained properly. To comply with the standards proposed in SB 103 however would have significantly negative cost implications for municipalities and volunteer fire departments. This proposal would eliminate any discretion for fire apparatus maintenance. There are many quality mechanics available in Connecticut that able to service these vehicles. However, there are very few qualified and certified mechanics able to service to these standards. To maintain these standards, some towns and cities will be forced to take apparatus off-line in order to have them serviced leaving the department unable to respond to calls. They could also be required to send them to certified mechanics that may be several towns away. This would not only exacerbate the maintenance costs, but negatively impact public safety.

CCM also has concerns with legislative language that removes important immunities a municipality can use in defending legal actions. This could be a particular issue when municipalities outsource the maintenance to a third party. This would drive administrative costs and create a barrier for municipalities to act in order to avoid liability.

CCM urges the committee to *take not action* on SB 103.

★★★★

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Muszynski, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM at mmuszynski@ccm-ct.org or (203) 500-7556.