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**Testimony of the City of New Haven
Before the Public Safety Committee**

Regarding

**HB-5389 AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF AN AUTOMATED
NUMBER PLATE RECOGNITION SYSTEM**

Submitted by
Maurine Villani, Tax Collector
March 4, 2014

Senator Hartley, Rep. Dargan, and members of the Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 5389. The City of New Haven respectfully requests that you oppose HB 5389 An Act Concerning the Use of An Automated Number Plate Recognition System. The proposed bill would limit the use of this technology to only the "Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, a municipal police department or the Division of State Police within the Department of Emergency Services". This technology is used for numerous purposes and affectively automates the recognition and processing of data that would otherwise be processed visually. In the City of New Haven this technology is utilized to collect taxes, establish garaging for assessment purposes and to identify scofflaws. I'll speak to the importance of this technology in collecting taxes.

The Finance Division of the City has a mantra – when everyone pays everyone pays less. As such, for nearly a decade the City has employed the use of this technology to improve the identification of vehicles with delinquent taxes and to – as permitted by statute – seize these vehicles to ensure the payment of taxes. While numerous vehicles are booted or towed, the program also has also improved the taxpaying culture as individuals have learned that there are tangible consequences of non-payment.

The proposed change in law would have a dramatic negative impact on the City's ability to collect Motor Vehicle Taxes. By reducing the City's ability to fully utilize current technology the City loses its ability to ensure that all citizens pay their fair share of the tax burden which will have an adverse impact on those citizens who pay their taxes on time and in full. In fact this shortfall will be significant and will only lead to an increased mill rate on those tax paying citizens because the lost revenue will have to be made up from them by increasing the mill rate or by reducing services.

In recent years the usage of such technology has increased the City's collection rate on motor vehicles to an all time high of 94%. Without this technology the collection rate would undoubtedly suffer, perhaps even dropping back to pre plate scanner levels of 88% (FY 02-03). This reduction in the collection rate on Motor Vehicles would represent a potential loss of revenue of \$937,384 to the City of New Haven.

The technology automates an otherwise tedious visual identification process. We urge the committee to recognize the unintended costs of limiting technology and urge your opposition to this bill.

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