



**Testimony
Betsy Gara
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the
Environment Committee
February 19, 2014**

**RE: SUPPORT - HB-5081, AN ACT CONCERNING PHOSPHORUS REDUCTION
REIMBURSEMENT FOR MUNICIPALITIES**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) supports **HB-5081, which provides a higher rate of reimbursement to municipalities for phosphorous removal projects.**

Municipalities have embraced efforts to protect the state's environment and natural resources. Many laws and regulations, however, impose difficult and costly compliance burdens on municipalities.

With respect to phosphorus removal, several towns in Connecticut are facing multi-million dollar wastewater treatment plant upgrades in order to comply with state and federal phosphorus reduction goals intended to benefit the state as a whole. This imposes a significant burden on certain communities whose plants discharge into non-tidal surface waters.

Recognizing this concern, the General Assembly adopted Public Act 13-239 which increases from 30% to 50% the amount certain towns are eligible to receive for phosphorus reduction projects under the Clean Water Fund grant program. However, the increased reimbursements are available only to the first three construction contracts entered into by municipalities before July 1, 2018. This creates an uneven playing field that benefits some towns to the detriment of others.

By providing a higher rate of reimbursement for additional phosphorus reduction projects, HB-5081 will help ensure that certain towns are not shouldering the financial burden of meeting what are essentially statewide environmental goals.

We urge your support for HB-5081.

COST is an advocacy organization committed to giving small towns a strong voice in the legislative process. Its members are Connecticut towns with populations of less than 30,000. COST champions the major policy needs and concerns of Connecticut's suburban and rural towns. More information is available at www.ctcost.org.