



Testimony
Betsy Gara, Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the Energy Committee
February 17, 2015

RE: Proposed SB-568, AN ACT CONCERNING TELECOMMUNICATION TOWERS

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) *supports* **SB-568** which would provide greater opportunity for public comment and consideration of any concerns regarding the siting of any new telecommunication towers.

As the demand for wireless technologies grows, small towns and cities are increasingly faced with efforts to place telecommunications towers in areas that don't make sense for the town or its residents because of environmental, ecological or aesthetic concerns. Many towns have spent countless hours crafting zoning and land use regulations to control building and growth in their towns to protect neighborhoods, natural resources, historic districts, etc. and while the Siting Council may consider such local regulations, it has free rein to ignore them.

By requiring the Connecticut Siting Council to (1) convene a public hearing regarding the siting of a new facility or proposed change, improvement or replacement of an existing facility and (2) evaluate at least three alternative sites, SB-568 will ensure that communities have a voice in how the siting or improvements to facilities will impact residents and businesses. Moreover, it will ensure that the council considers other possible locations that may be better suited to the placement of a tower.

COST understands that the Federal Telecommunications Act has jurisdiction of this area, however, the Act does not limit the ability of towns to make decisions regarding the placement, construction or modification of personal wireless service facilities. In fact, Connecticut is unique in regulating the siting of cell phone towers at the state level, as pointed out in a report by the Office of Legislative Research (OLR 2008-R-201).

SB-568 offers a balanced approach regarding the siting of telecommunications towers without undermining the role of the Connecticut Siting Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Connecticut Council of Small Towns
1245 Farmington Avenue, 101 West Hartford, CT 06107

Tel 860-676-0770 Fax 860-676-2662