



Western Connecticut

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

April 17, 2015

Dear Chairs Berger and Fonfara,

Dear Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) to share the region's concerns regarding Senate Bill 1131.

WestCOG supports economic development and giving municipalities flexibility in providing tax relief. We understand the bill would give some municipalities, particularly those where high tax rates may be a disincentive to development, the option to reduce those rates for new business development and to provide tax relief to existing commercial and industrial property owners.

However, we are concerned about the "regional mill rate" in SB1131. We question whether use of this term in the bill represents an attempt to anchor regional taxes in statute. This is the same term, and it is defined the same, as in the regional taxation provisions of SB1. WestCOG strongly opposes that concept and the imposition of regional property taxes in general.

Property tax relief can be, and has been, accomplished in many places without the complication of a "regional mill rate." We laud the General Assembly's work to promote economic development, but we respectfully ask that the tax relief in SB1131 be redefined in a way that does not raise the specter of regional taxation.

Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Francis R. Pickering
Executive Director