Testimony
Laura Francis
First Selectman
Town of Durham
Before the Public Safety Committee
February 5, 2015

Durham relies on the Resident State Trooper program to provide public safety coverage in our community. We value the relationship we have developed with our trooper, who has enhanced public safety for our residents and businesses.

I strongly **support SB-261, AN ACT CONCERNING THE OVERTIME COSTS OF RESIDENT STATE POLICE OFFICERS**, which will address concerns with increasing fringe benefit rates.

Last year, Durham received a notice in late August that the fringe benefit rate had increased to 83.25% effective July 1. Although we expected some increase in the rate, this represents a big jump in costs.

Towns need to be able to manage costs to prepare and implement budgets and minimize disruption in programs. When we are informed of sizable increases in costs after our local budget has been adopted, it puts us in a difficult position with regard to providing services to our residents.

The Resident State Trooper program is a valuable partnership with the State Police that helps us create and maintain safer communities. As the state considers ways of encouraging towns to form regional partnerships to deliver services more efficiently, we must remember that the Resident State Trooper program *is* a regional partnership that allows the state and the towns to share responsibility for providing critical public safety services.

Unless the costs of the program are controlled, this regional partnership may be compromised, undermining public safety in our communities. Moreover, the state may wind up shouldering 100% of the cost of providing such services if towns are forced to reduce or abandon their Resident State Trooper program.

Therefore, I urge you to **support SB-261** to assist municipalities in sustaining a strong public safety presence in our communities.