



Testimony  
Betsy Gara  
Executive Director  
Connecticut Council of Small Towns  
Before the Appropriations Committee  
April 21, 2015

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), which represents 115 towns throughout Connecticut, opposes provisions in **HB-6825, AN MAKING DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS AND ADDRESSING THE DEFICIT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2015**, which would sweep \$10 million from the Community Investment Account.

The Community Investment Account is a successful model for acquiring and preserving open space lands to help protect the state's environment, water resources and natural habitats for future generations. It also supports historic preservation efforts by providing grants to municipalities and other entities for a wide range of projects, including preserving or revitalizing underutilized historic structures or places.

Recognizing the value of these programs to our communities, COST supported the use of municipal fees to fund the Community Investment Account, despite concerns that towns spend an inordinate amount of time and resources in collecting fees that are diverted for state purposes. Sweeping these funds violates the trust that we placed in the legislature that these fees would be dedicated to protecting farmland, open space lands, historic preservation and affordable housing.

COST urges lawmakers to refrain from sweeping funds from the Community Investment Account which will undermine what has proven to be a powerful tool in supporting programs that will benefit Connecticut and its residents for years to come.

*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.*