



**Testimony of  
Betsy Gara  
Executive Director  
Connecticut Council of Small Towns  
Before the  
Planning & Development Committee  
February 4, 2015**

**RE: HB-5087, AN ACT STREAMLINING THE MUNICIPAL CHARTER  
REVISION PROCESS FOR CERTAIN TECHNICAL CHANGES**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) supports the intent of *HB-5087*, which seeks to create a process for minor and technical changes to be made to a town's charter without having to subject the charter to a full review.

By law, a commission appointed to draft or amend a municipal charter or amend a home rule ordinance must consider (1) the changes or items specified in the petition that initiated the adoption or revision process, if applicable, and (2) anything else the appointing authority recommends. Under current law, the commission may consider additional changes or items it deems desirable or necessary.

HB-5087 would authorize a town to move forward with minor or technical changes without the expense or time involved in undertaking a full charter revision. Even where a charter includes provisions that are clearly out of date, towns may put off revisions because it opens up the entire charter for review and revision.

For example, some charters may specify cost thresholds for projects subject to competitive bidding requirements. These thresholds may not have been updated for a number of years, requiring towns to competitively bid minor expenditures. This is the case in one town whose charter requires any expenditure greater than \$2500 to be competitively bid.

The process developed under this bill should continue to provide residents with the authority to petition to revise sections of the charter, comment on the scope of the revisions at public hearing and vote to approve or reject any changes.