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Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the Planning & Development Committee
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HB-6851, AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT TRANSIT CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) **supports the intent of HB-6945** to establish a Connecticut Transit Corridor Development Authority. Creating more walkable, livable communities through transit oriented development is certainly a laudable goal.

In addition, investment in local infrastructure and economic development are critical to Connecticut's economic vitality and quality of life. The state has made important strides in funding programs to improve local roads and bridges which are vital to creating a safe transportation network to support our residents and businesses.

COST is concerned, however, with certain aspects of the bill, as follows:

Composition of the Board

Municipal officials and representatives of regional organizations, such as the Council of Governments, should have a seat at the table. The balance of the board, as proposed, may be heavily weighted in a direction that is not consistent with the interests of the community or region.

Scope of Authority

It is unclear under Section 1(3) whether the Transit Corridor Development Authority's jurisdiction supersedes local zoning and land use regulations. Towns are under considerable pressure to adopt zoning and land use regulation to protect the safety and welfare of residents and businesses within their community. Efforts to sidestep these local regulations and ordinances generally create issues negatively affecting the town.

Coordination of Resources

It appears that the Authority, as proposed, would have broad authority to utilize municipal resources on development projects without the input of municipal officials.

Acquisition of Land

The process for the acquisition, lease, purchase or disposal of land and personal property raises questions about how this will impact local decision-making.

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Coordination with MPOs and COGs

The state has invested significant time in focusing transportation planning efforts through regional organizations. This bill appears to ignore their involvement and raises questions regarding how the Transit Corridor Authority will coordinate with these organizations as partners.

COST would be pleased to work with lawmakers to address these issues to ensure that the new Authority works with municipalities and regional organizations as partners in infrastructure investment.

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