



CCM 2015 Testimony

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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent 156 towns and cities and over 96% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

HB 6851, "An Act Establishing the Connecticut Transit Corridor Development Authority"

CCM and its member towns and cities have been strong advocates for transportation infrastructure investment and improvements. Indeed transportation infrastructure is a top priority for CCM.

HB 6851, which establish a quasi-public Connecticut Transit Corridor Development Authority (Authority) raises numerous concerns that CCM request be addressed before the Committee take further action.

- Sec. 1 (3) would define any area within a half-mile radius of a transit station as falling within the purview of the proposed Authority. Would the Authority have control over developments within this area, would this control supersede town and city zoning, regulations and ordinances? This could give the Authority dominion over large swaths of communities.
- Sec. 5 (c) would require the proposed Authority to coordinate the use of *all state and municipal planning and financial resources that are or can be made available for any authority development project* in which the authority is involved and Sec. 5 (d) would require *all state and municipal agencies, departments, boards, commissions and councils shall cooperate with the Authority* in carrying out the purposes enumerated in Sec. 2 of this act. What the planning and financial resources would encompass? This section appears to remove or limit local control and input on any or all proposed Authority development projects. This appears highly problematic.

What happens to municipalities that have or plan to have, transportation authorities? Local authorities know the needs, abilities and landscapes of their towns and cities best. Their efforts should not be thwarted in any way.

Any Board of Directors for any Authority created by this proposal should have adequate designated seats for municipal CEOs or their designees, to ensure towns and cities have adequate representation and input on any proposals that may be carried out by the Authority

HB 6851 would allow the newly created Transit Corridor Authority to acquire, lease, purchase or dispose of land and personal property. Would any property acquired by the Authority become tax-exempt removing needed

revenues from local grand lists? Given the chronic underfunding of State PILOT payments any additional properties acquired by the Authority and removed from local tax rolls would have a significant fiscal impact to towns and cities and shift the property tax burden to residents and businesses.

These serious concerns must be thoroughly examined and addressed before this proposal goes further.

CCM looks forward to working with Committee to address these issues and creating a workable partnership between the State and municipalities in order to improve and expand Connecticut's transit network.



If you have any questions, please contact Randy Collins, Senior Legislative Associate, at rcollins@ccm-ct.org or (860 707-6446).