



# TOWN OF STONINGTON

SELECTMAN'S OFFICE  
GEORGE CROUSE, JR.  
FIRST SELECTMAN

152 Elm Street • Stonington, Connecticut 06378  
(860) 535-5050 • Fax (860) 535-1046  
[gcrouse@stonington-ct.gov](mailto:gcrouse@stonington-ct.gov)

March 17, 2015

Senator Catherine Osten, Chair of the Planning & Development Committee  
Representative Philip Miller, Co-Chair

## **LCO No. 5233 An Act Concerning Tax Fairness and Economic Development**

The sections of this act relating to motor vehicles would have a major negative impact on the Town of Stonington, as the motor vehicle portion of the 2014 Grand List composes 5.43% of the Grand List generating \$2,908,606 in revenue; plus the supplemental list which generates an additional \$374,458 in revenue. To remove and transfer this revenue to the State is distressing especially when the State has historically reduced, eliminated or redistributed grant reimbursements for other purposes. The municipality would then be faced with the insurmountable challenge of replacing this revenue source. Presently revenue is received immediately; however, under the revisions there is no date as to when the distribution would be made to the municipality. The distribution of revenue to municipalities is also formula based, that can be modified, resulting in lower grant payments. This proposal is counterproductive to a municipality's budget process.

Our present mill rate of 20.43 is substantially less than an estimated statewide average of 29 mills. This would be an increase in taxes to many of our taxpayers, especially for owners of newer vehicles.

In addition, Stonington shares post offices with another municipality, annually vehicles are transferred from Stonington to the other municipality. The Town of Stonington also has five (5) fire districts that collect taxes on motor vehicles. There is no provision for the identification of the vehicles and reimbursement to the district. For these reasons there is no assurance that the Town and districts would receive their proper allocation. There is also no clear provision for the application of personal exemptions such as for veterans except for active duty servicepersons. Many veterans do not own real estate and potentially lose this benefit and pay on a higher mill rate.

The effective date is October 1, 2016 of this proposed bill; however, Section 49 transferring the listing of vehicles to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the Commissioner of Revenue Services on or before December 1, 2015 rather than 2016 which would be the vehicles for the October 1, 2015 Grand List. This means there would be no motor vehicle list for October 1, 2015. Furthermore many of the registered vehicles are un-priced and there is no provision in this legislation for addressing the time and preparation of valuing these vehicles.

The appeal process and proof of removal is also being transferred to the State making it further inconvenient for our taxpayers when vehicle values are challenged; a vehicle is stolen and not replaced; totaled; sold; or registered in another state.

The shifting of the tax burden to the other categories, real estate and personal property results in higher tax burdens at the local level, and impairs the stability and establishment of a municipal budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Crouse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a stylized "Crouse".

George Crouse, First Selectman  
Town of Stonington  
860-535-5040