

# Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



February 19, 2016

Esteemed Chairs Osten and Miller,  
Esteemed members of the Planning and Development Committee:

As Executive Director of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG), I would like to comment on House Bill 5182, *An Act Exempting Leased Municipal Property from Taxation*.

The exemption of property leased to municipalities from taxation seems a sensible move. Eliminating the mandate for local governments to pay tax on such property will reduce the expense of leasing and the cost of doing business, ultimately providing savings to taxpayers.

In the spirit of lowering the cost of government, I would like to suggest that your Committee amend the Bill to include the state's nine Councils of Governments (COGs).

The primary function of the state's nine COGs is to provide a framework to obtain efficiencies by sharing municipal services at a regional level. Including the COGs in HB5182 would increase these efficiencies—and thus the dividends to regional service sharing—by decreasing the costs of space and equipment to the COGs. The savings would be considerable: if amended to cover the COGs, HB5182 would save WestCOG an estimated 20% on its leases. These savings would be reinvested in regional service sharing, saving our members additional money.

I urge you to amend HB5182 to give COGs same opportunities as the municipalities they serve and, thus amended, to vote in favor of it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis R. Pickering". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Francis R. Pickering  
Executive Director