

**Derrylyn Gorski  
First Selectman  
Town of Bethany  
Public Hearing Testimony  
Labor & Public Employees Committee  
March 8, 2016**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of the provisions in HB-5377**, which provide towns with much-needed relief from the prevailing wage mandate by increasing the project thresholds. .

The prevailing wage rate is generally substantially higher than the market rate, resulting in significantly higher costs for state and local projects. The prevailing wage is an hourly wage paid to the worker plus fringe benefits (such as a pension and health insurance). If the employer does not provide benefits, the amount of the benefit must go to the worker as additional pay.

The hourly benefit rate is often more than 50% of the required hourly wage. For example, in 2010, the Connecticut bricklayer rate was \$29.50 hourly pay plus \$16.41 hourly benefits (for a total prevailing wage hourly cost of \$45.91). Recently, the prevailing wage mandate cost the Town of Bethany an additional \$54,000 for 2.9 miles of road.

Adjusting the prevailing wage thresholds is long overdue. It has been more than two decades since the prevailing wage thresholds have been adjusted even though construction costs have increased dramatically in that period. Given the considerable strain on our local budgets, we must take steps to alleviate unfunded mandates that drive up taxpayer costs. Updating the prevailing wage thresholds would be a significant step in this direction

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.