



# neccog

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Testimony Regarding

Raised Bill 5604

An Act Concerning Regional Efficiencies

made before the

Planning and Development Committee

March 11, 2016

Senator Osten, Representative Miller, members of the Planning and Development Committee - my name is John Filchak, Executive Director of the Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments. I also come before you today as a member of the Commission on Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies (MORE). **Raised Bill 5604 speaks directly to issues we examined at the MORE Commission and I urge your favorable consideration of this legislation.**

Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG), a state leader in the innovation, development, advocacy and application of regionalism, is a 16-town regional council of governments founded in 1987. NECCOG is focused on achieving results for our member towns through regionalism — offering a range of voluntary – member initiated programs and services — depending on the collective and/or individual needs of our member towns. These programs include: transportation planning and project assistance; engineering; land use planning and regulation development; economic development; administrative assistance; animal services; transit administration; property revaluation; emergency preparedness; geographic information services and paramedic intercept services. Our regional approach to problem solving enables our member towns to achieve efficiencies and economies of scale that individually would be difficult to realize.

HB 5604 seeks to explore a means to enhance our ability to develop, understand and most importantly measure the impacts of regionalism through the development of a “regionalization tool” to assess the performance and efficiencies achieved by municipalities and boards of education. The bill further proposes to apply the criteria developed to municipal funding. This is a sound idea - we need to explore alternatives that may yield improvements to the current system. Currently, Connecticut in its funding of local government and local education is not subject to any criteria or measure related to the efficiency in the use of state funds or the use of regionalism in the use of these funds. The approach proposed would mark a distinct departure from the current system for municipal aid. However, given the reality of the State’s fiscal condition and the limits our municipalities have in terms of revenue options - it seems that the exploration of the study proposed is prudent and necessary.

Given that the outcome of the proposed study is not known. Our member towns are not yet ready to endorse the regionalization tool that will be recommended by the MORE Commission. However, we are fully prepared to work with this committee and to continue our work and support of the MORE Commission on this initiative to foster solutions for our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.