

Written Testimony for the Planning and Development Committee

March 22, 2017

Rick Dunne, Executive Director of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments and
Lyle Wray, Executive Director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments, in
opposition to Raised House Bill 7293.

Senators Cassano, Logan, Representative Lemar and members of the Planning and
Development Committee:

We are the executive directors of two of Connecticut's largest planning regions,
encompassing fifty-seven contiguous municipalities and 40% of Connecticut's
population. Thank you for accepting our testimony in opposition to House Bill 7293, An
Act Concerning Regional Consolidation Efforts and Municipalities.

We recognize the goal of this legislation is to encourage regional service delivery, a
concept our Chief Elected Officials vigorously support. However, the means it would
create to accomplish this worthy goal - separate Public Service Districts led by
unelected boards - would undermine the hard-won gains that this Legislature has
adopted to empower municipal chief elected officials to act in concert through their
regional councils of governments.

We and our colleagues in the Connecticut Association of Councils of Governments
(CTCOG) worked directly with many members of the Planning & Development
Committee in 2014 to have Connecticut's regional planning organizations consolidated
into Councils of Governments, strengthened and governed exclusively by municipal
chief elected officials who are directly accountable to their voters and taxpayers.

This new mechanism contemplated under Sections 3 and 4 of HB 7293 allowing
municipalities to create new instrumentalities is unnecessary as municipalities already
have the power to consolidate service delivery. Further, such Public Service Districts,
granted the ability to issue debt but not to raise revenue will place them beyond the
fiduciary control of towns and taxpayers, while potentially saddling them with long-term
obligations, even should they choose to opt-out in a successive fiscal year. We continue
to support the Councils of Governments boundaries set out by OPM as the correct
venue for consolidation efforts where municipal CEOs who comprise the decision
making bodies of COGs are directly accountable to voters.

We feel that the time for specific Public Service Districts may yet come, but that these
decisions should be made within current law and under the auspices of municipal chief
elected officials who can control both the debt and expenditures of such organizations.
Although we feel strongly that HB 7293 is an inappropriate vehicle to accomplish

municipal consolidation, we look forward to working with the members of the Planning and Development Committee to develop sensible and workable solutions that keep municipal CEOs in charge of their taxpayers debt and expenses.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be pleased to discuss these issues further with the Committee at your convenience.

Rick Dunne, Executive Director, Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments.

Lyle Wray, Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments