

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

**Testimony for the Finance Committee
Re: Senate Bill 1137
An Act Concerning Deposits in Lieu of Taxes
April 29, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on Senate Bill No. 1137: An Act Concerning Deposits in Lieu of Taxes. Connecticut College would be one of the institutions from which these deposits would be collected. The College understands the financial constraints facing distressed municipalities. As the enactment of this fee would greatly impede with our ability to carry out our core mission and adversely impact our surrounding communities, **Connecticut College is opposed to this bill.**

We are grateful for our ongoing partnership with the City of New London. As a not-for-profit institution of higher learning, our mission is to educate students to grow into thoughtful, discerning leaders and engaged citizens. As part of that mission, our students, faculty, and staff are pleased to contribute to the educational, economic, and cultural life of New London through teaching, volunteering, and other forms of public service. And we are glad to share our cultural, social, educational, and natural resources with the citizens of our wonderful city. We are grateful, in turn, for the support the City provides us through essential services, and for the good relationships that we have been able to develop over the years with municipal leaders.

In recognition of our partnership, the College's Board of Trustees has made a commitment to pay the City of New London \$50,000 per year for the next five years for a total investment of \$250,000. In 2018, the College began paying an annual wastewater fee to the City in the amount of \$60,000 in addition to making a one-time voluntary payment to the City in the amount of \$100,000. This is in addition to the \$6.2 million the City of New London received in 2018 through state PILOT and Pequot funds, \$2.5 million of which was directly attributable to Connecticut College. Should this fee be enacted, it will cost the College more than \$1 million. This would have a significant impact on the community, including the elimination of services.

Currently, the College works with more than 50 regional community partners, and its offices and academic departments support New London Public Schools with student teachers, faculty volunteers, and significant grants. More than 100 Connecticut College students are working with New London Public Schools, and 500 students participate annually in local volunteer and internship experiences. As one of many examples, our award-winning ENRICH partnership pairs Connecticut College students with Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School students to increase their civic understanding, enhance reading skills, and build communication in multiple languages. This program has served more than 200 children in the past three years. This summer, we will offer iD Tech, one of the top computer coding programs in the country for children ages 7-17, and

Education Unlimited, which offers courses ranging from SAT prep to public speaking for middle and high school students.

Our community contributions go beyond these educational endeavors to support families and individuals. For more than three decades, the campus has been home to the Connecticut College Children's Program, a model child and family-focused early childhood preschool program for young children of diverse backgrounds and abilities. Each year, the program serves approximately 90 children and their families. The children and families in this program are reflective of the general population of New London County who are seeking a high quality early childhood program.

Connecticut College has also provided longstanding financial support to the City of New London. The College specifically earmarks financial aid for local residents with the Jane Bredeson Scholarship, which covers up to half the cost of tuition for New London residents who are full-time students. Outstanding area high school students also have the opportunity to take one course tuition-free through our New London Scholars Program.

These efforts demonstrate our commitment to the City of New London and our desire to continue working closely with City leaders and our community partners. Should this bill move forward, we will have to discontinue our voluntary financial contributions to the City. Additionally, the College would be unable to cover the transportation costs for students who intern at local businesses and provide essential educational services as outlined above. The City, surrounding municipalities, and community partners would then bear the burden of financing these eliminated services. The annual fee would also divert critical financial resources from our core mission of teaching and research and limit our ability to provide much needed financial aid to worthy students. Passing such costs onto students would place an undue burden on students and families, compromising their ability to pay for a college education.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you not to move this bill forward.

Yours sincerely,

Katherine Bergeron, President
Richard Madonna, Vice President of Finance and Administration