

**Town of Barkhamsted
Incorporated 1779**

**Don Stein
First Selectman, Town of Barkhamsted
Before the
Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee
April 29, 2019**

RE: SB-1139 – AN ACT ELIMINATING PROPERTY TAX ON CERTAIN MOTOR VEHICLES AND ADJUSTING THE UNIFORM PROPERTY ASSESSMENT RATE

My name is Don Stein, I am the First Selectman of the Town of Barkhamsted.

Given recent cuts in municipal aid and additional costs resulting from the state shifting greater responsibilities onto municipalities, I urge you to oppose this measure.

Eliminating the property tax on motor vehicles will only provide some nominal relief to those car owners that do not own a home or rent an apartment. However, elimination of this source of local revenue will cost homeowners, renters, and other real estate owners more in the long run. Homeowners will pay more in property taxes and renters will see higher rents

Connecticut is already far too reliant on the property tax to fund local services. Homeowners and businesses are increasingly frustrated with increases in mil rates. Unfortunately, due to state mandates like the Minimum Budget Requirement and increasing costs associated with special education, towns have little recourse to reduce local budgets. This is particularly true in Barkhamsted in which education expenses are 80% of our annual budget and we provide almost no town-funded services beyond education and highway safety.

As a result, when the state adopts property tax exemptions, this shifts a greater tax burden onto homeowners and businesses. Our residents already shoulder a tremendous property tax burden and many of our residents on fixed income cannot afford additional property tax increases. Rather than eliminating a significant source of local revenue, lawmakers should consider ways of eliminating unfunded mandates that drive up local costs and instead should eliminate the barriers to shared services programs that may help us reduce costs over time.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in opposition to SB-1139.