



CITY OF HARTFORD

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
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LEIGH ANN RALLS
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LUKE A. BRONIN
Mayor

JOHN S. PHILIP, CCMA II
Assessor

March 5, 2021

Dear Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

Thank you for raising HB6545. It would provide municipalities with a useful tool to counter a large and growing problem: tax evasion of motor vehicles with out-of-state registrations.

With a history of a very high tax rate and high insurance rates, Hartford has had a serious registration compliance issue for many years. Back in 2015, the Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles supplied the Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers with a list of vehicles registered in Maine with Connecticut mailing addresses. There were 1,648 motor vehicles on that list. Most Connecticut towns had a handful of cars registered in Maine. Hartford had 267, by far the most. East Hartford, the next runner up, had 66.

We issued tax bills, which were generally not received well. I asked one exasperated taxpayer how they came to register their new car in Maine. He said that, stymied by back taxes trying to register his car in Connecticut, a local dealer told him that that would be no problem, we'll just register the car in Maine.

This bill is a local option that will not impose responsibility on the state Department of Motor Vehicles or any municipality that does not wish to participate. If we are going to continue taxation of motor vehicles, it would provide an enforcement tool that if successful, would advance the cause of a more equitable distribution of the local property tax.

Please pass HB6545 out of committee.

Respectfully,

John Philip, CCMA II
City Assessor