



## ***TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE***

February 19, 2021

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members representing 168 towns and cities.

**SB 241      AN ACT CONCERNING OVERSIGHT OF THE CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY.**

**SB 605      AN ACT CONCERNING THE PORT AUTHORITY**

**SB 610      AN ACT CONCERNING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY**

**SB 866      AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT PORT AUTHORITY**

**CCM supports these bills** and the intent to provide greater oversight of the Connecticut Port Authority and ensure that local municipalities are adequately represented on the board of the Port Authority.

CCM strongly supports the efforts of the City of New London to ensure that they and other port cities and towns have the proper representation on the board of directors of the Connecticut Port Authority (CPA).

The need for language that clarifies the role of a host municipality was recently highlighted when the CT Port Authority granted a private for-profit company a long-term lease to operate the State Pier in New London. This deal originally included provisions for the Port Authority to receive \$750,000 annually in addition to 10% of any profit generated by the operation of the port. The host city of New London would have received their existing PILOT funding of approximately \$250,000 and had little if any input regarding the terms of the contract or reimbursement to the city which is responsible for providing police and fire service in addition to infrastructure maintenance. Fortunately, follow on discussions between the city, the Port Authority and the Governor's office allowed for additional compensation to be allocated to the city.

While, CCM is supportive of the CT Port Authority and its efforts to improve our deep-water ports and facilitate economic development around these assets, we need to ensure that our host

municipalities are included in any discussions to buy, sell, or lease property within their city. Increasing collaboration will benefit the host municipality and the Port Authority by ensuring any development is aligned with the economic development goals of both entities and that the plans are mutually supporting and reduce friction.

Municipalities are overly reliant on a regressive property tax to fund all levels of local services such as police and fire, road and infrastructure maintenance, services to children and the elderly and providing for the education of our children. At the same time this property tax base has been disemboweled by 99 mandated property tax exemptions that have left cities like New London with half of the real property within the city exempt from property taxes. This has caused a shift in the tax burden to residential and commercial tax payers and stifled economic growth.

The current deal has left New London out in the cold and unable to have meaningful if any participation in the development of the state pier and surrounding areas. It is time that our local leaders are given a seat at the table of the Connecticut Port Authority so that they can advocate on behalf of their communities and our shared constituents. We cannot allow quasi public entities with little oversight to dictate the future of our ports and the cities that host them without allowing those municipalities a seat at the table.

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If you have any questions, please contact Randy Collins, Advocacy Manager of CCM at [rcollins@ccm-ct.org](mailto:rcollins@ccm-ct.org) or (860) 707-6446.