



**Testimony
Betsy Gara
Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Before the Housing Committee
February 7, 2023**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) appreciates the opportunity to comment in **opposition** to **HB-6593, AN ACT CONCERNING HOUSING AUTHORITY JURISDICTION.**

As drafted, the bill sets forth a process to authorize a housing authority to expand its jurisdiction to neighboring municipalities.

Under existing law, municipal and regional housing authorities are authorized to exercise certain powers, including developing and operating affordable housing projects and administering tenant-based Section 8 voucher programs. Housing authorities may only exercise these powers within their area of operation.

Under the bill, a housing authority is authorized to expand its jurisdiction without the approval or input of the municipality regarding the expanded area of jurisdiction. This raises concerns about the impact of the bill on a municipality's efforts to address its housing, community, and economic development goals.

COST urges lawmakers to amend the bill to provide that any housing authority may adopt an expanded area of operation, "provided the governing body of the municipality to be included in the expanded area of operation, at its sole discretion after evaluating the housing needs of the municipality and the qualifications of the housing authority, adopts an agreement authorizing such housing authority to operate in the municipality as an expanded area of operation."

Moreover, the bill should provide that if the governing body of such municipality does not adopt an agreement with a housing authority that requests such agreement, the governing body's failure to adopt the agreement cannot be construed to be a violation of section 8-30g or of any other provision of the general statutes.

As currently drafted, COST opposes the bill.