



Capitol Region Council of Governments 2011 Legislative Agenda

Connecticut State Issues

State-Local Partnership to Address State and Local Fiscal Challenges. CRCOG seeks to participate in a collaborative effort to resolve the pressing fiscal crisis facing our state and municipal governments. State and local governments in Connecticut are inexplicably tied to one another through our current systems of revenue generation and sharing in an effort to provide critical and required services to our citizens. Any shifts in revenues and services may have substantial and unanticipated impacts. CRCOG requests that state leadership reach out to the regions and local governments in partnership to address the pressing fiscal situation that is likely to continue for a number of years. CRCOG stands ready to participate in collaborative and thorough discussions on spending, revenues and on measures to improve the efficiency of state and local services.

More Revenue Options for Towns Acting Regionally. As part of the broader conversation on state-local revenues, spending and service efficiency, the option for municipalities acting together in a region to use alternative sources of revenues shared regionally should be considered to supplement the very narrow tax base available to towns. Measures such as hotel occupancy fees, a small sales tax supplement and auto rental fees are some examples. Local option revenues could in small part be pooled at a regional level, both to replace lost state revenue and to advance local and regional priorities such as improved service sharing efficiencies. CRCOG continues to support making the local share of the conveyance tax permanent.

Advance Key Transportation and Transit Improvements. Despite dire financial circumstances, the region needs to move forward to improve mobility of our workforce both within the region and between cities. The top two transit priorities of CRCOG for the better part of a decade have been the New Britain to Hartford bus rapid transit and enhanced rail service from Hartford to New Haven and New York City. While much more can be done to improve transit, these two projects should be advanced now as the foundation for further progress in the future. **CRCOG believes that the I-84 Viaduct project be at the same level as the busway. It is important to link the two projects.** CRCOG strongly supports moving ahead with both inter-city commuter rail and the Hartford-New Britain bus rapid transit projects as a foundation for further economic development and workforce mobility. Significant federal funding is available to advance both of these projects. Losing more than a quarter of a billion dollars in transportation funding to another part of the country should the bus rapid transit project not advance should not be an option.

State Support for Effective and Efficient Regional Planning and Service Sharing.

A good deal of state policy over the past five years – from land use to economic growth to transit and affordable housing to name a few – would benefit immensely from strong regional planning and implementation capacity as has been the case at CRCOG for the ten major service sharing projects currently underway. As more tasks will likely be asked of regions in the state going forward, appropriate state support for regional capacity is important for appropriate land use planning, support for transit oriented development and service sharing initiatives.

Municipal Solid Waste Management. CRCOG is leading an effort involving Mid Connecticut Project towns to provide for an orderly, predictable, efficient, and cost-effective integrated solid waste management system. CRCOG asks for assistance in moving forward with this agenda.

Prevailing Wage Provisions. CRCOG requests the elimination of the two-tier system that distinguishes between renovation and new construction projects, that the threshold for prevailing wage projects be increased to \$1 million, and that the project minimum threshold be indexed automatically to inflation in the construction industry.

Efficient State Services. CRCOG supports efficiency efforts in all executive agencies to streamline permitting of municipal projects and reasonable approaches to common municipal problems. The projects that are held up in the permitting process represent thousands of Connecticut jobs on hundreds of projects. Specifically, we support efforts for municipalities to use gray water from Publicly Owned Treatment Works for agricultural applications, the approval of alternative and innovative residential septic system designs and expedited approvals of local bridge and highway projects by CT Department of Transportation and CT Department of Environmental Protection.

Federal Issues

Authorization of Federal Transportation Funding. The federal transportation funding bill is due for reauthorization. CRCOG relies on planning funds from the federal bill for substantial support. CRCOG stands ready to partner with the state and other agencies in a New England wide effort to shape the terms of the bill to meet the needs of a region with aging and heavily used infrastructure.

Livable Communities and Greenhouse Gas Reduction. CRCOG was successful in receiving a \$4.2 million bi-state, three-region grant for sustainability. Much more is needed to move forward on greenhouse gas reductions and improved livability in pedestrian and bicycle access and more transit related redevelopment. Federal funding is one important source for supporting these efforts.