

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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DATE: MARCH 14, 2007
TO: CHAIRMEN AND MEMBERS OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
**FROM: DAVID K. KILBON, CHAIR, CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS,
FIRST SELECTMAN EAST GRANBY**
**SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 7090, AN ACT CONCERNING RESPONSIBLE
GROWTH**

CRCOG serves as the regional planning organization for the City of Hartford and the 28 surrounding suburban and rural communities. The CRCOG legislative priorities for 2007 include support for a range of issues necessary to improve our regional economic competitiveness, many of which related directly to the responsible growth criteria in HB 7090. Some of these criteria include actions supportive of transit-oriented development, inter-town cooperation, expansion of affordable and supportive housing opportunities and farmland and open space preservation.

CRCOG strongly supports calling together representatives from all state agencies under the umbrella of the Office of Policy and Management and the Office of Responsible Growth to promote statewide coordination on growth issues. The creation of a Responsible Growth Task Force, accomplished by this bill will allow for this coordination across a wide range of issues at the state level and will in turn lead to more responsible planning.

In concept, CRCOG supports working toward consistency between state, regional and local plans and using these plans as a basis for coordinating state investment decisions. The objective of consistency reviews should be making sure that guiding policies established in the plans are not in conflict—not requiring that the plans be exactly the same. Regional Plans should be developed in the same manner as State plans, with some form of consultation with other regional entities, State agencies, and member municipalities throughout the planning process.

CRCOG has long supported regional review and comment on projects of regional significance, when such reviews are advisory to the decision-making bodies charged with approving the projects. State statutes already require advisory reviews of zoning and subdivision proposals abutting or spanning town lines. Advisory reviews of projects of regional significance are a logical extension of existing COG powers. The new review process could be evaluated after several years, to determine its effectiveness in guiding and coordinating regional growth, and determine if further changes to the process are required. Key questions to be asked might include: Are projects that are truly significant from a regional standpoint being captured by the referral criteria? Are the regional comments being incorporated into final decisions regarding projects? Are they resulting in development that is more responsive to inter-municipal issues and concerns? Is the review process resulting in approvals that support regional and state growth and conservation objectives?

Through coordination, consistency reviews and the strengthened regional planning efforts proposed here, Connecticut will benefit from responsible growth.

In summary, CRCOG supports the overall thrust of House Bill Number 7090 and would be happy to respond to questions or request for further information.

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