

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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TO: CHAIRMEN AND MEMBERS OF FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING

**FROM: DAVID KILBON, CHAIRMAN CRCOG POLICY BOARD
LYLE D. WRAY, PHD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 7402, AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL SERVICES

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) represents 29 towns and cities surrounding Hartford, CT. Our members have collaborated for more than 30 years on a wide range of projects to benefit our towns individually and the region as a whole – from cooperative purchasing to many public safety projects, including the CAPTAIN mobile data terminals in police vehicles. CRCOG works with our members to improve governmental efficiency and save tax dollars through shared services and other direct service initiatives.

Service sharing is not a new concept in Connecticut – numerous examples of service sharing were documented in the ACIR publication “Local Government Cooperative Ventures in Connecticut” published seven years ago, and many new ones have been implemented since then. However, there is still enormous untapped capacity for local governments to deliver better services more efficiently by working together. Shared services can reduce costs to towns, make the services provided to customers more consistent across jurisdictions, and may allow municipalities to provide better quality services than would otherwise be possible. However, figuring out how to provide a service collectively requires an up-front investment of time and money that is beyond the means of many towns.

We strongly support a beefed up state incentive program for municipalities to examine and implement service delivery programs on a more regional level, and will enable them to take advantage of larger, more complex service sharing opportunities that save the most money. CRCOG as an organization is ready, willing and eager to take advantage of such incentives to help our member towns to move forward in greater service sharing.

Fiscal pressures on local governments in the state are not likely to go away. In fact, without significant changes to the way local governments provide services, programs will be cut, professionalism and morale within local governments will suffer, and citizens will pay more for a lower quality of service. CRCOG is committed to facilitating service sharing, but recognizes the need for a comprehensive state incentive program to get the most promising projects implemented. For these reasons, we strongly support HB 7402 and ask for your support.