

Capitol Region Council of Governments

2009 Legislative Agenda

CRCOG Has a Strong Track Record of Regional Cooperation. The Capitol Region Council of Governments represents more than 800,000 residents of CT in 29 towns. Over the past 40 years CRCOG has a proven track record of regional cooperation, service sharing, and innovation:

- Purchasing Council providing joint procurement services for 76 towns and organizations;
- The first region wide GIS system in the state serving all 29 towns with a web-based system;
- Ten shared services projects underway funded by the regional performance incentive grant program;
- The CAPTAIN mobile data display system for police and many other joint public safety and emergency services ventures.

Federal Legislative Agenda

CRCOG has two main focus areas at the federal level: active participation on behalf of our member towns in the federal stimulus bills and participation in reauthorization of the federal transportation funding bill that provides almost 70% of the transportation funding in the state and in the region.

Stimulus Package. The main, though not exclusive focus for federal economic recovery package, comes from our role as a Metropolitan Planning Organization under the federal funding system. CRCOG will act as an assembly point for eligible projects and work to communicate developments to our member towns. This involves compilation of so-called “shovel ready” projects, communicating with federal legislative staff on progress of the laws, and working to take full advantage of the national bills. In addition to transportation, CRCOG will work to keep member towns informed of the many other provisions of the federal stimulus legislation through weekly legislative updates and other communications.

Reauthorization of Transportation Funding. What has been called T4 is up for reauthorization in 2009. Unless a continuing resolution is employed, the reauthorization will be considered by Congress this year. This involves work with the National Association of Regional Councils on positions, working with

statewide and New England wide coalitions on funding approaches and working to take full advantage of a reauthorized bill for the regional transportation and transit plan.

State Legislative Agenda

Economic Recovery. CRCOG stands ready to assist the state in streamlining regulations and would advocate for statutory change should that be necessary to receive the expected transportation and other federal funds. Tight timelines are in the legislative concepts to date that will require expedited handling of transportation funds. Whether it be by executive order, legislative streamlining, or composing accountable work groups of state agency, attorney general and legislative staff to assure that funds are drawn down in timely manner, coordinated state action will be necessary to ensure that economic stimulus funds do not revert from the region to the state or from the state to a national pool for redistribution to states that are able to move more quickly.

Smart Growth and Regional Initiatives. A number of CRCOG members and staff have been working on a package of state initiatives centered on the Planning and Development Committee including:

- **Restoring the state shared services grants** (Regional Performance Incentive Grants) to allow the region to build on the first round of such grants with projects underway.
- **Providing additional local revenue options** for towns such as hotel, and rental car charges to diversify the revenue base for towns from excessive reliance on property taxes.
- **Regional tax base sharing** of sales tax and other revenues as the state's fiscal situation permits to provide a more predictable, reliable revenue base for local governments.

Solid Waste Management. CRCOG took the leadership to review solid waste management options with the upcoming expiration of the 2011 agreements. Based on this work CRCOG is drafting a request for proposals for an integrated solid waste management system for the region. CRCOG would like the support of the state in moving in this direction and would ask that no measures be taken legislatively to obstruct the region's progress in this important area.

Protection of the Most Vulnerable. As in past economic downturns, pressures for service rise in emergency shelters, and food and fuel assistance, to name

only a few of the impacted services. CRCOG asks that the state carefully consider the impact of the downturn on those least able to respond and take appropriate measures for their protection.

Nonfinancial State Actions. There are many actions the state can take to assist local governments in this time of economic stress including: not imposing any new mandates on local government and waiving selected mandates in light of resource constraints, and allowing for electronic publication of notices while continuing publication of outreach notices in other languages. We ask that prevailing wage thresholds be increased to \$1,000,000 and that it be indexed for future inflation.