

Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



March 3, 2022

Esteemed Chairs Cassano and McCarthy Vahey,
Members of the Housing Committee:

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the following bills:

- House Bill 5043, *An Act Concerning Motor Vehicle Assessment*. WestCOG **supports** this bill. The bill would reform the assessment of motor vehicles, replacing average retail values (and assessor's estimates for vehicles for which average retail values are not available) with a fixed depreciation schedule from manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP), which is readily available for nearly all vehicles. This change would benefit the public, as it would create predictability in future assessments, and thus allow a better estimate of tax liability, in comparison with market values which often move in unpredictable ways. It would also benefit municipalities, by reducing the administrative burden of motor vehicle assessment. This change would bring Connecticut in line with states including Massachusetts, whose tax on motor vehicles is based on a depreciation from MSRP.
- House Bill 5269, *An Act Concerning Remote Meetings under the Freedom of Information Act*. WestCOG **supports** this bill. Over the past two years, the members of WestCOG have accrued extensive experience with remote and hybrid meetings. While remote and hybrid meetings did present a learning curve in the early days, the region is now adapted to them. Even as life returns to 'normal', the benefits that remote and hybrid meetings offer are so compelling that it is expected many meetings will continue in a remote or hybrid format, provided that those options continue to exist. WestCOG urges you to ensure that they do.

Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis R. Pickering". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Francis R. Pickering
Executive Director