

Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



February 20, 2024

Esteemed Chairs Kavros Degraw and Rahman,
Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill 5173, *An Act Authorizing the Online Publication of Legal Notices by Municipalities*.

WestCOG **supports** this bill:

- While legal notices in newspapers may have been a reliable way to reach the public in previous decades, declines in newspaper subscription and readership suggest that this is no longer the case. This creates legal risk for municipalities.
- Many other types of public announcements (e.g., job postings, real estate listings) have long since migrated to dedicated platforms that provide exposure beyond what is available in local news markets, and higher quality information and functionality that is superior to what is available in a legal notices or classifieds section.
- The process of posting a legal notice creates unnecessary cost, as compared to posting a notice on a website under state or local control (which are generally free).
- Connecticut has built a statewide platform CTsource, for procurement and advertising. CTsource could be extended (or a new platform could be created) to host legal notices and public announcements from municipalities across the state, providing one-stop exposure to information that was once confined to local news markets.
- Maximal exposure to interested parties, whether vendors, jobseekers, or others, is critical to obtaining competitive bids and fair prices in an era where contractors and workers are in short supply.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis R. Pickering".

Francis R. Pickering
Executive Director