

March 12, 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 Raised Bill 333, *An Act Concerning Local Charter Revisions*.

WestCOG **supports** this bill.

This bill will rescind changes that were enacted last year to address concerns relating to a process that was under way in a single municipality; however, these changes were passed into law not as a special act, which would have applied only the municipality concerned, but rather as a public act that impacts all municipalities in the state; nor was any sunset provision included to revert these changes after the end of the local process in that municipality.

With that process now complete, the specific justification for these changes no longer holds; furthermore, the longer these changes – which, in hindsight, may have been overbroad – stay law, the greater the risk they will create unforeseen consequences for other municipalities in the state. Examples impacts of leaving these changes in place include preventing cities and towns from:

- Changing fees for the processing of planning and zoning applications
- Changing the time of day for planning and zoning public hearings
- Change how planning or zoning vacancies are filled
- Adopting or changing ordinances for planning or zoning alternates
- Combining or separating planning and zoning commissions
- Combining or separating borough and town zoning commissions
- Adopting or abolishing zoning
- Adopting or changing transfer of development rights among municipalities
- Changing vote, public notice, or hearing requirements for eminent domain
- Changing vote, public notice, or hearing requirements for disposition of municipal property

Based on our understanding, WestCOG does not believe that the intent of the legislative changes made last year was to abrogate these grants of authority statewide but to address a local concern that has since ended. In light of that, these authorities should be reinstated – which Bill 333 will do.

Thank you for your consideration.



Francis R. Pickering
Executive Director