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## **CCM Survey: Resident State Trooper Proposal Would Cost 29 Towns \$3.1 Million Total Amount Would Exceed \$5 Million**

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) today (Monday, March 9) released the results of a statewide survey of towns that assessed the costs individually and statewide if smaller towns are forced to assume 100 percent of the cost for their resident State Trooper Program (RST).

Overall, 29 towns that responded to the survey -- about half the communities which have resident state troopers -- said it would cost over \$3.1 million (\$3,132,488) for all of them to assume the full cost of the program. On average, it would cost each town over \$108,000, with the individual town total costs ranging from about \$39,000 to over \$310,000. In total, 62 towns have resident troopers. If all towns had had responded to the survey, CCM projects the total cost would have been much higher.

See attached for complete results of survey. Here are examples of the increased costs presented by individual towns if they needed, as proposed by the Governor, to move from 70 percent to 100 percent of the cost for their resident state trooper. Andover -- \$55,375; Beacon Falls -- \$42,127; Burlington -- \$115,413; Colchester -- \$68,559; East Granby -- \$114,800; Ellington -- \$263,571; Killingly -- \$213,000, Oxford -- \$300,000; New Fairfield -- \$310,000; and North Stonington -- \$143,408.

Following is the complete text of CCM testimony presented today, March 9, on this critical issue.

The Resident State Trooper Program is one of the primary examples of how collaboration and service sharing can be beneficial to the State and its municipalities. Without this program the State would be responsible for providing law enforcement services at their full cost albeit from resources available at the Troop, or the community would be required to start their own department at a cost, which would well exceed available resources.

The proposed change in SB 946 that would require participating towns pay 70% to 100% would impose a significant financial burden on small town budgets and the local taxpayers they serve. CCM conducted a survey of towns participating in the Resident State Trooper Program. The results revealed that if 100% is required, a \$40,000 to \$300,000 increase in municipal budgets would likely occur. For many small towns, this increase would be unsustainable. Local officials would have to decide whether to continue to participate in the program, or rely on troopers from the barracks to provide necessary public safety. If this occurs, it is unlikely that the State will benefit from the anticipated \$4 million savings this proposal forecasts, as troopers will still be required to patrol and respond to incidents in the community.

The current 70/30 split between participating municipalities and State is an equitable distribution. The current percentage allows municipalities the benefit of a State Trooper, as well as it allows the barracks the ability to strategically utilize that trooper when needed. Resident State Troopers are state employees, and the State maintains administrative oversight in the coordination of their response to other emergencies. As several local CEOs have reported, their Resident State Trooper is often called out of town – almost 5-8 times per week – leaving local CEOs with little to no managerial influence on the assignments of Resident State Troopers, beyond their contractual agreements.

CCM understands the need for law enforcement to respond to other events, however local property taxpayers should not be responsible for covering such “state-related” costs. Therefore, CCM recommends at the very least, that the Committee consider requiring the State to reimburse municipalities, or provide credits for the time Resident State Troopers spend outside of their communities.

In the end, Resident State Troopers protect vital safety needs for the approximately 62 towns statewide associated with this program. Requiring these towns to pay in excess of hundreds of thousands of dollars per year to sustain the program, and therefore requiring them to explore other options for police services is not good statewide public policy.

CCM urges the Legislature to oppose the recommendation to mandate small towns, and their property taxpayers, that participate in the Resident State Trooper Program cover 100% of the costs of a trooper – and instead, maintain the current local/state payment structure which more accurately aligns with the actual local/state operations of our this highly-valued program.

**CCM respectfully urges the Legislature to amend SB 946 to (a) maintain the current local-state funding structure of the Resident State Trooper Program; and (b) restore critical revenue to towns and cities – for the benefit of residential and business property taxpayers.**