

# **SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

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## **LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 2015 SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTED BY SCCOG: 12/17/14**

The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) annually drafts a legislative agenda, and this year does so with a renewed optimism for the possibilities that this year's legislative session presents. The SCCOG's twenty-one chief elected officials are cognizant of the myriad of issues facing the General Assembly this year, but retain a positive outlook and sense that the state's and region's legislators are up to the task in seeing the Connecticut's most pressing needs addressed. This year, as in previous years, major issues such as the state's economy, the need to retain and create jobs, the State budget and its resultant impact on municipal budgets, and comprehensive tax reform, will be given high priority. SCCOG agrees that these items should be given the General Assembly's full and undivided attention. However, the SCCOG offers five specific thoughts on legislation that it would like to see the southeastern Connecticut delegation pursue on its behalf. These are as follow in no priority order:

1. Legislation that would reform the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program, which provides funding to cities and towns having tax exempt properties.
2. Legislation that would disallow the imposition of any additional unfunded mandates on municipalities, including regulations adopted by State administrative agencies that create a financial burden to towns over a certain threshold, at which point they must be approved by the General Assembly before they can be enacted.
3. Legislation that would improve Connecticut's business climate; while this administration has worked hard to portray Connecticut as open for business, a new paradigm is needed if the state is to successfully compete with other states that have financial and locational advantages that we do not. One example that our municipalities and local businesses face are the approval of unsubstantiated worker's comp and unemployment claims approved by the Department of Labor.
4. Legislation that would revise the mandate that municipalities place legal ads in newspapers, amending the law so that it does not require the level of detail that a municipality must publish while maintaining the requirement for transparent local government.
5. Legislation that would address education issues including ECS, special education funding, the Minimum Budget Requirement, teacher evaluation requirements, bilingual programming, new online testing, and non-public school transportation and services, all of which have significant impact on local board of education budgets.

SCCOG is always appreciative of the delegation's willingness to meet and have a dialogue with us regarding critical issues facing southeastern Connecticut. As in years past, the SCCOG and its individual chief elected officials offer to work with our legislators in your efforts to see implemented our requested legislation, as well as other legislative initiatives that are important to the state as a whole.

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**Member Municipalities:**

Bozrah \* Colchester \* East Lyme \* Franklin \* Griswold \* City of Groton \* Town of Groton \* Lebanon \* Ledyard \* Lisbon \* Montville \* New London \* North Stonington \* Norwich \* Preston \* Salem \* Sprague \* Stonington \* Stonington Borough \* Waterford \* Windham