

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 2025 SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY November 20, 2024

- **VETERANS PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION MODIFICATION:** Refine the language of PA 24-46 to ensure that tax exemption benefits are granted to 100% disabled veterans as was intended by the original passage of the bill.
 - The bill was intended to provide property tax relief to veterans unable to work due to a service-related disability. Unfortunately, the bill passed in 2024 without the “100% disabled” criteria that would limit its applicability only to veterans unable to work as a result of their service-related disability. While the Office of Legislative Research estimated that statewide, municipalities would lose \$4.9 million in property tax from this exemption, the impact is likely to be substantially greater, with 13 towns in southeastern Connecticut estimated to lose over \$2.4 million in uncollected property tax each year.
 - Language should be added to the statute requiring veterans be 100% permanently and totally disabled to qualify for this exemption, or PILOT funds should be made available to impacted municipalities. Annual certification should be required of both disability status and income.
- **EARLY VOTING:** Review the rollout of Early Voting Access in 2024 and amend related statutes to improve access and address challenges experienced in 2024.
 - Reduce the number of days early voting is available to four days (Thursday – Sunday). While many voted early in 2024, the length of time available did not appear to increase overall voter turnout.
 - Eliminate early voting for primary elections.
 - Reduce extended hour days to no more than 8 hours to simplify staffing.

Member Municipalities:

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

If language assistance is needed, please contact SCCOG at 860-889-2324, office@seccog.org

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如果您需要语言帮助，请致电 860-889-2324 或发送电子邮件至 office@seccog.org.

- Provide dedicated early voting tabulators for vote counting at time of early vote.
- **EDUCATION:** Increase the current level of state funding for special education, which is currently inadequate.
 - Lower the threshold for reimbursement from the state for students that require special education services from 4.5 times the cost of the average expenditure per student to 2 times the cost of the average expenditure per student.
 - Modify the MBR related to special education costs so that expenditures above base student costs are not included in the calculation of the MBR.
 - Provide assistance to towns and cities to address non-budgeted mid-year expenditures related to special education costs.
 - Maximize the State's use of available federal funding.
- **SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL:** Increase the capacity of Connecticut's Waste-to-Energy plants to process solid waste.
 - Provide state funding and permitting assistance to expand capacity of remaining Waste-to-Energy plants.
 - Provide funding and incentives to municipalities and regional waste authorities pursuing strategies such as organic waste composting and pay-as-you-throw.
 - Expand Extended-Producer-Responsibility (EPR) programs and allow/require the use of recycled content in products purchased by Connecticut's state and local governments.
 - Support the creation of redemption centers locally through the investment of bottle deposit revenue and increasing grant availability.
- **FLOODING:** Expand resources and technical assistance to municipalities to proactively address increasing flooding risks.

- Establish state matching fund source to enable municipalities to apply for federal funds requiring non-federal match.
- Develop statewide pluvial (rain-driven) flood hazard mapping.
- Increase funding for CT DEEP Climate Resilience Fund grants.

- **FUNDING FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT:** Rescind public transit funding freeze.
 - Public Act 22-40 froze public transit funding at 2024 levels but authorized CTDOT to establish a new grant fund to provide additional funding. As the grant program was never set up, funding is now essentially frozen at 2024 levels, even as costs rise. The freeze only applies to transit services not served by CT Transit, including Southeast Area Transit (SEAT), River Valley Transit serving Middletown and the lower CT River Valley, and Greater Bridgeport Transit. A continued funding freeze will result in fare increases and/or service cuts.

- **LOCAL SALES TAX:** Authorize municipalities to receive 1% of sales and hotel tax generated locally, or the authority to establish a local sales tax.
 - Sales tax revenue would help offset municipal reliance on property taxes to fund local services, particularly in municipalities with a high proportion of tax-exempt properties and/or municipal costs that serve regional needs.
 - A 2017 CCM report supported diversion of 1% of local sales tax to municipalities, and authorizing municipalities to establish additional sales, meals, and/or lodging taxes.

SCCOG Legislative Committee:

Fred Allyn, Committee Chair	Mayor	Ledyard
Cheryl Blanchard	First Selectman	Sprague
Sandra Allyn-Gauthier	First Selectman	Preston

Glenn Pianka	First Selectman	Bozrah
Tina Falck	First Selectman	Griswold
Danielle Chesebrough	First Selectman	Stonington
Michael Schefers	Warden	Stonington Borough
Bob Carlson	First Selectman	North Stonington
Thomas Sparkman	First Selectman	Lisbon
Michael Passero	Mayor	New London
John Salomone	City Manager	Norwich