



**HOUSATONIC VALLEY
COUNCIL OF ELECTED OFFICIALS**

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Mr. David LeVasseur, Undersecretary
CT Office of Policy and Management
450 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106-1379

June 30, 2010

Dear Mr. LeVasseur:

The mayors and first selectmen of HVCEO have discussed the new report by the CT Association of Regional Planning Organizations (CARPO) concerning boundary criteria for Connecticut's regional planning organizations. As Chairman the members asked that I convey to you their views on this subject.

HVCEO will be pleased to cooperate with CT OPM as it conducts a statewide study of regional boundaries as required by State Statute 16a-4c. However, long experience with this region's boundary indicates that it continues to serve municipal and regional needs very well.

State Statute 16a-4c passed in 2008 included boundary study criteria for regional planning organizations. You recently brought to our staff's attention that state appropriations may not be sufficient in 2011 to conduct the in-depth boundary analysis envisioned by the 2008 statute.

A way must be found to conduct the upcoming boundary analysis within the legislative criteria defined in 2008. To protect municipal interests, this Council will not react favorably to proposed regional boundary revisions that are derived from lesser standards than those required in 16a-4c.

The view of area citizens is that Greater Danbury is very secure in its regional identity. This area was a well defined region of Connecticut long before the current regional planning organizations and their boundaries were created.

It needs to be recognized statewide that Greater Danbury, as presently bounded, is one of the most important economic engines in Connecticut. This is a prosperous region, increasing its share of total state population every decade for the past fifty years. And our regional center Danbury stands number one in retail sales out of all 169 municipalities.

Given this successful economic development, and to avoid disrupting related regional marketing, HVCEO members are reluctant to consider deconstruction.

The members are prepared to continue making use of the current regional boundary as they chart with state government new and positive directions for regional initiatives and efficiencies.

The HVCEO also requested that I forward an inquiry to you. Members understand that State Statute 16a-4c requires that the HVCEO boundary soon be reevaluated. It is also understood that there is a general feeling by many in Hartford that there are "too many regional planning organizations."

However, what is the driving force behind such opinions? If you have any research as to cost benefit advantages or better planning projected to be achieved by larger regions, please forward it to our staff for distribution.

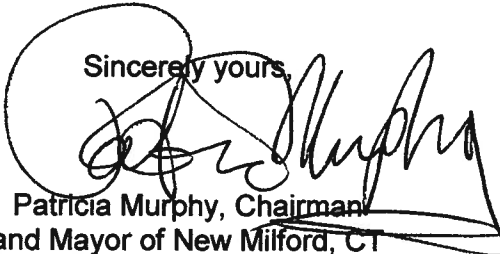
A theme of our recent discussion was that municipal leaders wish to be open to considering "the other side of the story." It just has not reached them yet via a spokesperson or research. The "too many regions" group needs to come forward and make its case.

I would also like to add a perspective from our adopted regional plan. The 2009 Housatonic Valley Regional Plan structured by State Statute 8-35a defines an in-depth Smart Growth strategy for this planning region. The geographic metropolitan elements of city center, city fringe, suburb, exurb and outlying rural land are all identified and coordinated. CT OPM approved this plan as consistent with the state plan.

We fail to see how the parceling out of these geographic features and appending them to adjacent regions could possibly meet Connecticut's standards for Smart Growth.

In closing, the overall tone of the Council's mayors and first selectmen is that they will remain open to objective review of your upcoming boundary research. Should the OPM study reveal deficiencies in our current boundary please contact me.

Thank you for your consideration of these perspectives.

Sincerely yours,

Patricia Murphy, Chairman
and Mayor of New Milford, CT

cc: HVCEO Members
Regional Legislative Delegation
Directors of Regional Planning Organizations

