

# Planning and Development Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-7144

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FROM THE  
REGIONAL PLANNING INCENTIVE ACCOUNT TO EACH REGIONAL

**Title:** COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS FOR THE HIRING OF CERTAIN PERSONNEL.

**Vote Date:** 3/21/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/10/2025

**File No.:** 623

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Planning and Development Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

To distribute funds from the regional planning incentive account to each regional council of governments for the hiring of personnel to facilitate the creation of additional housing.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Martin Heft, Undersecretary, Office of Policy and Management,](#)

Heft opposes the bill, stating that it duplicates existing programs. He refers to the Governor's Budget Implementation Bill (H.B. 6865), which already allocates \$250,000 per COG for similar staffing. He argues that the existing Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) already covers such services and additional funding requests can be made through it.

[Laura Francis, Interim Executive Director, South Central Regional Council of Governments \(SCRCOG\),](#)

Francis supports the bill's goals but recommends allowing flexibility in staffing to meet regional needs. She suggests roles such as housing compliance officers and planners in addition to building inspectors. She also endorses Governor Lamont's proposal to allocate an additional \$250,000 to each COG for waste and stormwater management but urges the committee to consider inflation adjustments to maintain essential services.

### NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Jason Rojas, House Majority Leader, Connecticut General Assembly,](#)

Representative Rojas supports the bill's goal of empowering COGs to provide technical support for housing planning. He emphasizes that COGs are underutilized, and that this legislation could enhance their capacity for solving local issues. He views H.B. 7144 as a foundation for further developing their potential.

[Matthew Fulda, Chairman, Connecticut Association of Councils of Governments \(CTCOG\),](#)

Fulda expresses strong support for the bill and Governor Lamont's \$250,000 allocation proposal. He recommends flexibility in staffing choices based on local needs and suggests indexing Regional Services Grant funding to the consumer price index to account for inflation.

[Samuel Gold, Executive Director, RiverCOG,](#)

Gold supports the bill but urges that its scope be broadened to allow for roles beyond building inspectors. He highlights the importance of staffing earlier stages of the housing development process and recommends indexing Regional Services Grant funding to the Consumer Price Index.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None expressed.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF GENERAL COMMENTS:**

[Jim Perras, CEO, Homebuilders and Remodelers Association \(HBRA\)](#)

Perras appreciates the intent behind the bill but raises concerns about unclear authority of regional building inspectors, potential bureaucratic redundancy, and risks of slowing down the development process. He calls for collaborative revisions to the bill language to avoid unintended consequences.

**Reported by: Shay Richards**

**Date: 4/4/2025**