

TOWN OF SOMERS

600 Main Street
Somers, CT 06071
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Hello, my name is Bud Knorr, the First Selectman for the Town of Somers. I wish to speak in support of Senate Bill No 1115, which is for a 3-acer parcel conveyance from the State Department of Corrections, to the Town of Somers. We intend to use this site for a small public safety communications tower and related radio equipment.

Our community is home to three Department of Corrections Facilities: Northern, Osborn, and Cybulski. All of which are located in close proximity to each other on a 550+ acre complex located in the North-West corner of Somers, CT. The Town of Somers is responsible for providing Fire and EMS services to these complexes, and the recent COVID pandemic has only strengthened the need for collaboration between agencies. Last year there were over 225 emergency incidents to the Somers prison complex, mostly EMS in nature, and the need for adequate communications has been a recurring problem for local first responders. The location of our existing radio sites is literally at the opposite end of town and the topography and building construction materials are hindering our radios effectiveness.

This specific conveyance is to reallocate three acers at the edge of that complex, to allow our community to put up a public safety communications tower and possibly a small building for related equipment. Adjacent to the Corrections complex. Somers has already collaborated with the Department of Corrections and conducted several radio site analyses to figure out how our local first responders can best mitigate any emergencies in this area. As it turns out, the parcel at 264 Bilton Road is an ideal site to fill in our gaps in communications coverage. The Department of Corrections has been great to work with, and is trying to help our community in any way they can, but have admitted that their funding is tight and that the best solution would be for our community to acquire this property and to take ownership of our own radio system enhancements. The Town of Somers is willing to make the needed infrastructure investments, but we need access to the actual property.

The specific parcel we are talking about is an open lot along Bilton Road that is already designated by Department of Corrections as their "Fire Department Staging Area." A role it can continue to serve going forward even with the requested conveyance. In addition the property around the corrections complex was intended to serve as a buffer between the state facility and local property owners. With this proposed municipal use, the property will still serve in that function.

Again, we greatly appreciate your consideration in this matter. Somers likes to consider itself as a partner with State Agencies in regards to public safety, and we feel that this project will benefit everyone involved. Thank you.