



PRESS RELEASE
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COST PRESENTS TOWN CRIER AWARDS TO LAWMAKERS

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), which represents 115 smaller communities throughout Connecticut, presented five lawmakers with Town Crier Awards at its annual meeting on February 19 at the Aqua Turf in Plantsville, Connecticut. The event also commemorated COST's 45th anniversary as the Voice of Small Towns at the state Capitol.

COST's Town Crier Award was established to recognize and honor state lawmakers, municipal officials, and others who have distinguished themselves as outstanding advocates on issues affecting Connecticut's small towns.

Sen. Christine Cohen – Sen. Cohen was selected to receive COST's Town Crier Award in recognition of her leadership and hard work in addressing critical issues affecting Connecticut's small towns, including her efforts to address environmental challenges facing municipalities. She was successful last session in enacting a statewide fracking ban, adopting legislation to assist towns in addressing coastal resiliency issues, and in supporting the state's cideries.

"Sen. Cohen has been a staunch advocate in addressing the environmental challenges facing our smaller communities. She has reached out to work with towns to address concerns and costs associated with recycling and stormwater management mandates," said Matt Knickerbocker, First Selectman of Bethel and COST's President, in presenting the award.

Sen. Paul Formica – Sen. Formica was selected to receive this award because of his outstanding leadership on a wide range of issues Connecticut's small towns, including efforts to defeat proposals to shift teachers' pension costs to towns and support for legislation expanding opportunities for towns to participate in virtual net metering and other energy efficiency programs to reduce costs. In addition, the award recognizes Sen. Formica's ongoing efforts to support fair share funding for small towns, enact meaningful mandate relief, and support the Resident State Trooper program. Sen. Formica is a two time recipient of the COST Town Crier Award because he was honored for his advocacy efforts when he served as the first selectman of East Lyme.



“Sen. Formica is a tireless champion for Connecticut’s small towns,” said COST President Matt Knickerbocker, First Selectman of Bethel, in presenting the award.

“His leadership and advocacy on a wide range of municipal issues has been instrumental in addressing the needs of the state’s smaller communities,” Knickerbocker added. “He has been a strong advocate for providing towns with much-needed relief from unfunded state mandates and in supporting programs that are critical to our small towns, such as the Resident State Trooper program.”

Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey – Rep. McCarthy Vahey was selected to receive COST’s Town Crier Award because of her efforts to assist municipalities in reducing costs by addressing unfunded mandates and removing barriers to facilitate voluntary regional/shared service programs. In addition, COST appreciates her leadership in supporting changes in land use laws to promote economic development, such as Tax Increment Financing, Land Bank Authorities, and the creation of Arts & Cultural Districts.

“Rep. McCarthy Vahey, as House Chair of the legislature’s Planning & Development, always takes the time to understand how proposed legislation may affect Connecticut’s small towns. She recognizes the need for common sense approaches to helping towns reduce costs, grow their local economies, and meet the needs of their residents,” COST President Knickerbocker said in presenting the award.

Rep. Gail Lavielle – Rep. Lavielle was selected to receive COST’s Town Crier Award in recognition of her tireless efforts to defeat legislation that would have forced the one-size-fits-all consolidation of small school districts throughout Connecticut. In addition, the award recognizes Gail’s ongoing efforts to support fair share funding for small towns, enact meaningful mandate relief, and adopt a statewide fracking ban.

“We are honored to present Rep. Lavielle with COST’s Town Crier Award,” said COST President Matt Knickerbocker. “She fully understands how cuts in municipal funding and burdensome unfunded mandates affect property taxpayers and the delivery of critical local services, such as education. We appreciate her longstanding commitment to fighting for Connecticut’s small towns.”

Rep. Tami Zawistowski – Rep. Zawistowski was presented with COST’s Town Crier Award for her leadership role in addressing the needs of Connecticut’s smaller communities, including efforts to provide towns with meaningful relief from unfunded mandates and eliminate barriers that make it difficult for towns to move forward with voluntary shared services programs that reduce costs and improve the delivery of



critical services. In addition, COST appreciates Rep. Zawistowski's efforts to address issues facing volunteer fire departments and adopt changes in land use laws to promote economic development in small towns.

"We are proud to present Rep. Zawistowski with COST's Town Crier Award," said COST President Matt Knickerbocker, "She has been very responsive to the needs of her community and to concerns facing small towns throughout Connecticut."

Founded in 1975, COST is the only organization dedicated exclusively to advocating at the state Capitol on behalf of Connecticut's small towns.