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Executive Director and CEO: James J. Finley, Jr.

January 18, 2008

The Honorable M. Jodi Rell
Governor of Connecticut
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Rell:

Thank you for your letter of January 4 regarding your property tax relief proposals.

CCM appreciates that you have highlighted the problems and burdens of the property tax, and we thank you for the offer to work together to find solutions that work best for the residents and businesses of Connecticut. CCM takes you up on your offer and looks forward to working with you.

As you are aware, property tax relief and reform is not a partisan issue and it's one that affects communities of all types and sizes -- urban, suburban and rural. Only by working together, in a bipartisan manner, can this difficult and complex problem be addressed comprehensively.

CCM was very supportive of your education-funding initiatives last year and spoke out frequently in defense of those proposals. You rightly identified education finance as a key element in property tax relief, and we hope you will continue to fight this battle in 2008. We were disappointed that your five-year plan was not enacted.

Also, I want to be clear that CCM supported your goal of eliminating the motor vehicle tax, and we made constructive recommendations on how to strengthen your proposal to make sure that municipalities were made financially whole.

In our testimony last year before the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee we said:

We applaud the Governor for again taking on this difficult aspect of property tax reform. And this year's bill addresses some of the flaws in last year's bill, most significantly by providing that

the State would use the most up-to-date motor vehicle information in calculating exemptions and reimbursements.


We did oppose elimination of the property tax credit on the personal income tax to fund the program, and asked for an intercept fund to help ensure that casino gaming revenues continue to flow to towns and cities.

Similarly, the concerns expressed last year about your proposal to cap municipal property tax revenues were always couched in terms of opposition to a cap as a stand-alone solution. In fact, in the *Public Policy Report* we published this month we said “a property tax cap **by itself** does not constitute property tax relief or reform” (emphasis added). Any solution to property tax burdens has to be comprehensive and wide-ranging.

Town and city leaders appreciate your willingness to be open and flexible about the form property tax relief should take this session and beyond.

CCM looks forward to working with you on this mutual goal. I will contact your office soon to discuss how to best proceed with such a joint effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James J. Finley, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

James J. Finley, Jr.
Executive Director and CEO