

**Remarks by Acting DOT Commissioner Emil H. Frankel
Joint Public Hearing – March 3, 2008
Transportation and Government, Administration and Election Committees
LOB Room 2-E, Hartford, CT**

H.B. 5041 – An Act Concerning the Creation of a Department of Public Transportation, Aviation and Ports and a Department of Highways.

Good morning Chairmen Guerrero, DeFronzo, Slossberg and Caruso. Thank you for inviting us here today. For the record, I am Emil Frankel, Acting Commissioner of the Department of Transportation. As I believe most of you know, I was appointed Acting Commissioner by Governor Rell in early January and will be serving in this role for a short time longer.

I appreciate the opportunity to share some thoughts and ideas with you about the Governor's proposals to reorganize transportation in Connecticut and I particularly appreciate the opportunity to participate with Secretary Genuario in this hearing.

I would like to say at the outset that we at the D-O-T join with the Governor in a commitment to identifying the appropriate structure that will unleash the imagination and energy of our leadership and employees to meet the mobility needs of our state's citizens and businesses.

All of us share the goal of serving the needs of our customers – that is, those who use the state's multi-modal transportation system. I know that the Governor does as well. We cannot "take our eye off that ball," even as we consider the most appropriate institutional structure to achieve that end.

We are here today because Governor Rell has proposed two agencies – a Department of Highways and a Department of Public Transportation, Aviation and Ports. She would like this accomplished by 2010 – an ambitious goal by any standard.

Our role now is to analyze ideas and look for the best options for making the Governor's proposals work. In that connection, we want to analyze and present to the Governor and you some interesting, and perhaps relevant, models from other states. More specifically, we are looking at the models in place in New Jersey and Maryland for potential use, or at least guidance, here in Connecticut.

But the bottom line is that we share Governor Rell's goal of building transportation systems that will provide seamless, reliable, quality service to our customers.

Whatever the discussion about new institutional forms produces, my immediate – and most urgent – task is to push the process of renewing and rebuilding the financial and human resources of the D-O-T. That is the essential foundation for establishing the new, separate agencies that the Governor has proposed.

Whatever the structure, we must have strong agencies with the human capital and leadership to carry out the task of providing the best possible service to the people of Connecticut.

If we are serious about our commitment to getting people out of their cars and onto trains and buses, the idea of a separate Department of Public Transportation, Aviation and Ports merits serious consideration. My sense is that the missions of the two agencies – Highways and Public Transportation – if properly structured and implemented, could and would be complementary.

Connecticut citizens are used to a multi-modal approach – taking their cars to the train or to the bus or the airport. If we're going to succeed, we have to give our customers safe, clean, convenient and reliable alternatives to driving to work alone in their cars.

In the past three years, you and the Governor have implemented the largest investment in transportation in more than 20 years. I know we will continue to work with you to provide and maintain the transportation system that the citizens of Connecticut deserve.

To the extent that I can, and with the understanding that any changes will be carried out by my successor, I will be happy to answer your questions.

Thank you again for holding this all-important hearing today.