



**P-4 Council**  
**CSEA/SEIU Local 2001**  
**Stronger Together**

John A. Vitale  
President

Stephen P. Livingston  
Vice President

Carlton A. Grodotzke  
Secretary

Byron R. Lester  
Treasurer

SERVICE EMPLOYEES  
INTERNATIONAL UNION  
CLC

CONNECTICUT STATE  
EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION  
760 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106-1206  
www.csea-ct.com  
860.951.6614  
Toll Free 1.800.894.9479  
FL Toll Free 1.800.437.5630  
Fax 860.951.3526



March 3, 2008

#### GENERAL ASSEMBLY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Senator Donald DeFronzo, Co-Chair  
Representative Antonio Guerrero, Co-Chair  
Room 2300, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

#### GENERAL ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Senator Gayle Slossberg, Co-Chair  
Representative Christopher Caruso, Co-Chair  
Room 2200, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **Public Hearing on HB 5041: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF A DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, AVIATION AND PORTS AND A DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS.**

Members of the Transportation and GAE Committees:

First, I wish to thank your Committees for this opportunity to express my views on the proposal to dissolve the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT).

My name is Peter Macher, and I am an engineer in the DOT. I am also the President of P-4 Council's Chapter 9 of CSEA/SEIU Local 2001, and I represent approximately 500 employees, the majority which are engineers, who work in department's headquarters.

I would first like to speak to the federal funding challenges that will splitting the agency in two will create.

The majority of our members are involved in highway projects, and the State is paid with FHWA funds for the work we do. Other members are involved in transit projects, and the State receives FTA funding for this work. The FTA requires a dedicated workforce for such projects for the State to qualify for funding. Our members working on transit projects not only utilize the DOT's Personnel and Financial employees to get their jobs done, but also specialized employees who work in many other units, including Soils and Foundations, Hydraulic and Drainage, Planning, Environmental Planning, Environmental Compliance, Contracts, Rights of Way, Construction Inspection and the Lab.

Because we presently work in a single agency, it is routine to request the expertise of staff from another unit. Trying to get workers from another agency to support a project is difficult, and not just for funding. For example, it can take the DOT over a year to get a permit from the Department of Environmental Protection, and this is after the DOT transfers funds to DEP for the cost of staff to complete the permit work.

I fear that if the DOT is broken up and our transit engineers are moved into a new agency, it will be more difficult to design projects, and to recruit additional staff. The majority of transit engineers are presently transferred or promoted from the DOT's Highways unit.

It is also much more difficult to transfer or promote from one agency to another. Additionally, much of a project is designed using expertise from other units, which would be in another agency, adding time and costs to a project. Further, if transit engineers remain with their colleagues in the Highways unit, the new transit agency would lose control of planning and designing of projects.

Neither of these options is desirable. Making the current DOT work more efficiently is the best way that I can see to efficiently design highway and transit projects.

That requires changing the DOT from an agency that it is reactive and relies too much on outside consultants.

I'd like to share an example of these factors in my experience. About 10 years ago, I became aware of a dangerous a section of Route 9 through Middletown that is essentially a "freeway with stop lights."

On my own time, I designed a correction to this section of the highway and attempted to get the DOT to look at it and develop a project. After a year with no success, I took matters into my own hands. I took time-off work and approached the town of Middletown to meet with elected officials. I showed them the plan and explained that if they agreed with the proposal, they should contact the DOT and ask that the improvement be reviewed and considered. Town officials liked the design and followed through.

The DOT then hired a consultant to develop a whole new design. After 10 years of meetings, development of the south end has been agreed upon and is heading toward a design that is similar to what I originally proposed.

The north end, by the Arrigoni Bridge, has been modified, however. The unit that I work in has informed the design consultant numerous times that their proposal cannot be built without closing the Arrigoni Bridge, which is unacceptable. The consultant ignored this fact and is proceeding with their plan despite department warnings.

I believe the way forward is for the Department to be proactive on deficiencies in our state's highways, roads, bridges, rail lines, mass transit system, ports, and airports. That will require investing in the additional staff needed to take on these projects so we will not be forced to rely so heavily on outside consultant forces.

Thank you for the opportunity for allowing me to share my thoughts. I hope together we can make a better Department of Transportation.

### **Peter Macher**

Transportation Supervising Planner, Connecticut Department of Transportation  
President, Chapter 9, P-4 Council, CSEAVSEIU Local 2001