

# ACEC

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES  
*of Connecticut*

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REGARDING RAISED HOUSE BILL 5041

March 3, 2008

Good afternoon, my name is Paul Brady. I am Executive Director of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Connecticut (ACEC Connecticut) representing some 100 consulting engineering firms in the state, many of whom provide transportation engineering services for state agencies and municipalities. ACEC Connecticut has an active Liaison Committee with ConnDOT to work on procedures for delivering projects more efficiently. We have provided the Department with suggestions on how we can assist them in implementing many of the recommendations in the Governor's Commission on the Reform of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (the Critelli Commission).

I would like to take this opportunity to voice our opinion on Raised House Bill 5041, **An Act Concerning the Creation of a Department of Public Transportation, Aviation and Ports and a Department of Highways**. ACEC Connecticut neither supports nor opposes the proposal to split the current Department of Transportation into two Departments. Theoretically, either organizational structure can work. There are examples of other states having multiple organizations managing their transportation functions.

However, we do believe that, if the Transportation Committee approves the concept of splitting the Department of Transportation, there needs to be a central organization which will perform the planning functions and coordinate the two departments. This organization should manage the long range planning of transportation projects, coordinate with the public, municipalities, local planning organizations, the federal government and other departments (DEP, DECD, etc.), develop capital budgets, monitor and receive funding from federal and other sources, and then turn funded projects over to the Department of Highways and Department of Public Transportation, Aviation and Ports for implementation while maintaining oversight on schedule and costs.

As noted in the the Critelli Commission report, Connecticut faces a crisis in funding transportation projects and managing existing projects. The federal highway trust fund will go into the red next year and Congress will soon begin considering new authorization bills for highways and public transportation. ConnDOT is suffering from a loss of experienced middle and top managers and is having difficulty in hiring new Engineers to fill the gap.

If the Committee decides that splitting ConnDOT is the best structure for Connecticut, you must also address the important issues raised in the Critelli Commission. ConnDOT needs to focus on its mission with Congress, the Governor and this General Assembly finding long term solutions to fund our transportation infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration.