

Remarks to Transportation Committee Re: Bill 5750 on March, 5, 2008

Good Afternoon. I'm Dave Fairman from Waterford, CT.

Every day technology is used to assault us with new forms of junk mail, spam, pop-ups and mazes of signs.

- It's up to us to put information in it's proper perspective to optimize our quality of life.

We believe Governor Rell is on the right track in Executive Order 18 to stop and reduce Billboard Blight.

Billboards contribute little to our economy, but they impose a high cost.

- More than 700 communities nationwide prohibit the construction of new billboards. Because billboard control improves community character and quality of life -- which directly impact local economies.
- Communities and states that enact tough billboard controls enjoy strong economic growth
- Americans Get Very Little Information from Billboards

Billboard Control is Good for Tourism

- The best advertisement for tourism is no billboards.

Billboards are a Safety Hazard:

- Billboards are designed to distract motorists' attention from the road.
- The Federal Highway Administration found a positive correlation between billboards and accident rates.
- Federal and state courts have long cited traffic safety as a legitimate basis for billboard regulation.
- In the summer I-95 is a linear parking lot across southern Connecticut and we have had too many major accidents that have closed the road for many hours.

We are trying to restore our capitol city. Meeting an army of billboards on the way into the city devalues our efforts and wastes our very significant expenditures.

- Billboards set the wrong tone with a focus on alcohol, tobacco and pornography.

There are better much less intrusive options available:

- Logo signs and Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) are small, business directional signs that have proven to be successful in regions across the country, including Vermont.
- Both supply passers-by with needed tourist and services information without marring the area's visual quality.
- Logo signs and TODS displays are smaller and less obtrusive than billboards and generally cut advertising costs for roadside businesses.

It's Time to Take Aim at Billboard Blight

- The hundreds of communities that fight billboards each year clearly reflect the will of the people.
- In virtually every poll, significant majorities of Americans oppose billboard blight. Support for billboard control spans education levels, race, and gender; and it knows no geographic boundaries.
- People are tired of watching their scenic roadsides transformed into oversized Yellow Pages.

There is a lot of lobbying money at play, but the people of Connecticut deserve to be heard.

Bill 5750 should be revised to be compatible with our smart growth initiatives in line with Governor Rell's Executive Order.

Thank You!