

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL #425

DATE: 2/24/09

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

RUDY MARCONI - FIRST SELECTMAN RIDGEFIELD

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GOOD MORNING.

THANK YOU ALL FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY IN SUPPORT OF BILL #425 "AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE NORWALK/DANBURY TRAIN LINE."

IN 1999 WHEN I WAS FIRST ELECTED TO THE OFFICE OF FIRST SELECTMAN IN RIDGEFIELD, RIDGEFIELD WAS IN THE 5<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT AND JIM MALONEY WAS OUR CONGRESSMAN. OUR THEN GOVERNOR ROWLAND HAD MADE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE LEGISLATURE TO ELIMINATE THE DANBURY/NORWALK RAIL LINE TO REDUCE STATE COSTS. SOME OF YOU HERE TODAY REMEMBER THAT EVENT AND WORKED HARD TO PREVENT IT AND FORTUNATELY DID PREVENT IT.

SUBSEQUENTLY, CONGRESSMAN MALONEY WAS ABLE TO SECURE A FEDERAL GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,000,000 TO BEGIN A STUDY OF THIS VERY IMPORTANT COMMUTER LINE. INCREDIBLE

AS IT MAY SEEM, THIS STUDY IS YET TO BE COMPLETED--TO A FEW,  
THIS MAY NOT BE THAT UNUSUAL.

WHATEVER THE CASE, WE--AND BY WE I MEAN LOCAL ELECTED  
OFFICIALS--STATE LEGISLATORS, AND THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
COLLECTIVELY, NEED TO GET "ON TRACK" AND SUPPORT BILL #425.

THIS YEAR IS PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT YEAR FOR BUDGETING  
IN RECENT MEMORY, AND I AM NOT ENVIOUS OF WHAT LIES AHEAD  
FOR ALL OF YOU. THERE WILL BE SOME VERY DIFFICULT DECISIONS  
WE ALL NEED TO MAKE BOTH HERE AT THE STATE LEVEL AND FOR ALL  
CEO'S AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. UNQUESTIONABLY THERE WILL BE  
PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS THAT WILL NOT BE SUPPORTED. BUT WHEN  
YOU CONSIDER THIS BILL, BILL #425, I ASK THAT YOU KEEP IN MIND ONE  
VERY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION.

WHEN THE DUST HAS SETTLED AND THE AIR CLEARS AND WE HAVE  
BEGUN OUR UPWARD CLIMB OUT OF THIS SEVERE RECESSION, WE MUST  
BE SURE THAT OUR ACTIONS NOW RESULT IN PROJECTS THAT WILL  
ADVANCE OUR STATE AND REGIONS TO BE MORE EFFICIENT,  
ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE, AND PROACTIVE IN LEADING  
CONNECTICUT INTO THE FUTURE. BILL #425 BEGINS THIS JOURNEY.  
IMPROVED.