



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the  
Commissioner

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### **Public Hearing – February 24, 2009 Transportation Committee**

### **Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Joseph F. Marie Department of Transportation**

### **S.B. 425 – An Act Concerning the Improvement of the Norwalk/Danbury Train Line.**

### **S.B. 440 - An Act Requiring Automated Ticket Machines on the Danbury Train Line.**

The Department of Transportation (DOT) offers the following comments on S.B. 425 and S.B. 440, both dealing with improvements to the Danbury Train Line.

At present, DOT is conducting an Alternatives Analysis/Federal Environmental Impact Statement/Connecticut Environmental Impact Evaluation (AA/EIS/EIE) study to explore the potential social, environmental and economic impacts associated with five alternatives for improving its Danbury Branch commuter rail service between South Norwalk and Danbury, Connecticut (a total of 23.6 miles).

The study also examines extending commuter rail service 16 miles from Danbury to New Milford along the existing Housatonic Railroad's freight lines. These proposed improvements would enhance existing commuter rail service in the corridor and expand mobility for the region's growing workforce, as well as potentially reduce congestion in the Route 7 corridor and provide economic benefits to communities along the Branch line.

The alternatives proposed for consideration in the EIS as a result of the Feasibility Study (2006) include: (A) the No-build alternative; (B) a Transportation System Management alternative, which include service improvements such as new outbound service, and express service; (C) South Norwalk to Danbury Improvements including electrification, addition of passing sidings, and minor track realignment; (D) Extension of diesel passenger service from Danbury to New Milford with improvements including new stations and minor track realignment; and (E) Partial electrification from South Norwalk to the vicinity of the Merritt 7 Station with feeder bus/rail service to complement the new service. The EIS will incorporate data and findings from the Final Report.

In regards the provisions of S.B. 440, it is important to note that at present, there is a lack of available Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) equipment to provide these machines on the Danbury Branch train line. The Department has supported Metro-North Railroad's (MNR) efforts to improve ticket selling options for customers through the deployment of TVMs at most train

stations, through ticket sales via U.S. Mail and by conductors on-board trains using with handheld ticket machines.

Currently, there are two train stations on the Danbury branch that offer TVM sales; Wilton and Danbury stations. In addition to the TVMs at Wilton and Danbury, customers may purchase tickets on-board from conductors at no additional charge from the stations without TVMs. As noted above, train customers can also purchase tickets at other station locations and through the U.S. Mail via internet orders or through MNR's Mail & Ride program.

The estimated cost for capital on-site improvements and TVM equipment at the remaining stations on the Danbury line would be approximately \$1,000,000 with an annual service and maintenance cost of the equipment is about \$10,000.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato, Legislative Program Manager for the Department of Transportation, at (860) 594-3013.