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Senator Don DeFronzo
Representative Antonio Guerrero
Co-Chairs, Senate Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT .06106

March 4, 2009

RE: RE: SB 735, An Act Improving Bicycle and Pedestrian Access.

Dear Senator DeFronzo, Representative Guerrero and members of the Committee:

I submit this testimony to respectfully request your support for Proposed Senate Bill 735, An Act Improving Bicycle and Pedestrian Access.

Improving access to transportation for all citizens of the State of Connecticut through a mandate of required accommodation is an action that will address a number of very serious issues that face our communities. These include issues of safety, equity, efficiency, economic development and government accountability.

Children and seniors are especially vulnerable to the hazards of our public streets. They are disproportionately represented in the injuries and fatalities resulting from motor vehicle crashes. The socially and economically disadvantaged will disproportionately benefit from improvements to our walking, biking and transit infrastructures, as the expenses associated with car ownership effectively deny them the advantage of safe transportation.

In a world of scarce resources, not only of petroleum, but of physical space as well, an overinvestment in motor vehicle infrastructure is an inefficient use of government dollars. Personal vehicles represent the least space and energy efficient choice of transportation. Explicit incentives that encourage increased vehicle traffic is a poor investment in the future.

Additionally, the economic liabilities that present themselves when unimaginative and inflexible transportation investments are made are ultimately insurmountable. Congested roads lead to increases in the cost of business. Productivity plunges when employees cannot travel to work in a reasonable timeframe. Relocating businesses, wishing to attract the best and brightest employees, will avoid gridlocked states that fail to provide a rich transportation environment to their employees.

We have reached point in time where we must have strong political leadership that is capable of envisioning the relationship between streets and other public and private resources. Our streets are much, much more than conduits for motor vehicle traffic. The functioning of our streets as they relate to public health, social stability and economic development must be considered when we make our costly investments in transportation infrastructure.

I strongly urge your support of this effort to diversify our transportation investments in the state of Connecticut.

Respectfully Submitted by Erin Sturgis-Pascale