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Coffee Stop Testimony 2 March 2009

The only issue that prevents reinstatement of the Boy Scout Coffee Stop is the DOT ban against nighttime operation. For 25 years (1983 to 2007) the Labor Day Weekend Coffee Stop was conducted 24 hours a day, without incident, from Friday afternoon through Monday afternoon. The weigh stations are off the highway and the entrances, exits, and parking/coffee stop area are very well lighted by floodlights - therefore safe both for motorists and for Scouts. Abiding by Boy Scout requirements there is a minimum of two adults supervising the Scouts. Overnight there are only two or three Scouts on duty and the adults are often their own parents. The State Police stop by often and Waterford Police Chief Pendleton has said the Waterford Police could also visit the coffee stop when on their regular patrols.

On some of the Labor Day weekends the Scouts have served 4,000 cups of Coke, over 100 gallons of coffee, and 250 dozen doughnuts plus some bagels. Also, covered picnic tables and portable toilets were provided. This coffee stop generated considerable goodwill for the State of Connecticut. In 2002 motorists from 31 states and 5 countries produced 38 pages of 28 lines each of written comments, including "Great Service - Don't stop - We need this.", "A lot of traffic - we were sleepy.", and "Stopped by - Half asleep at 11 PM." This was a service project, not a fund raiser, and net donations which, in at least one year exceeded \$3,000 with an additional \$2,000 granted by a bank, were donated to charities.

By a 13 September 2007 letter the DOT imposed two new requirements: that we supply our own electricity and water (that requirement was deleted in June 2008) and the hours of operation are limited to 6:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m. daily. The DOT would not relent on the limited hours and then presented invalid or vague reasons and even made several claims that were not true. I have documentation, including some of the DOT's own documents, to back up this statement.

Because of the ban on nighttime operation this very large and worthwhile service project was terminated in 2008. The set up and the take down each require a few hours and could not be done each of four days.

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Labor Day Weeked Coffee Stop
East Lyme Boy Scout Troops 7, 24, & 66 And East Lyme Police Explorer Post # 045
30 August - 2 September 2002

Many of the travelers signed sheets to thank the Connecticut Department of Transportation for allowing the Coffee Stop. Thirty eight pages of 28 lines (including six signatures on one page) were signed by travelers from 31 states plus Africa, Canada, England, Mexico, and Vietnam.

States represented were:

Arizona	Georgia	Missouri	Oklahoma
Arkansas	Illinois	Montana	Pennsylvania
California	Kansas	Nebraska	Rhode Island
Connecticut	Maine	New Hampshire	Tennessee
Colorado	Maryland	New Jersey	Texas
Delaware	Massachusetts	New York	Vermont
District of Columbia	Michigan	North Carolina	Virginia
Florida	Mississippi	Ohio	

Some northbound comments:

Don't stop this effort.
 That goes double for us.
 Rt. 9 - A killer for falling asleep.
 This stop-What a lifesaver!! See you next year!
 Great service - Don't stop - we need this.
 Good job. (RI State worker)
 Thanks for help on safety
 We all think this is great.
 You're Great. Thanks. Kept us awake!
 Keeps me awake & safe.
 Great for travelers - Good to be able to stop & get refreshed.
 Thank you so much! I was falling asleep and really needed some good coffee.

Well needed.
 A welcome rest stop.
 Very thoughtful idea. God bless you all,
 A lot of traffic - we were sleepy.
 Much needed.
 Thanks! Kept us awake.
 Note to CT DOT "Keep the Scouts here"
 Stopped by - Half asleep at 11 PM.
 Great service to public.
 Kept us awake!

Some southbound comments:

Great, thanks & Good Idea-many times & Keep it up, Excellent
 Great, I love you all (Chris C- Africa) Very helpful - much appreciated.
 Very Nice to do this. Good community service.
 This is the best! Thanks. This is amazing (Derek F.-Dallas TX)
 Fantastic, Appreciate your work. Awesome, helps me stay awake.
 Excellent idea-Stop drivers falling asleep(4 from England) Great idea. Keep it going.
 Very beneficial. Thanks Conn & Boy Scouts (NC) Great lifesaver.
 Thank you for helping to keep us safe and alert. Thanks DOT, Always support BSA.
 Excellent surprise. Helps promote driver safety.
 God bless the BSA. Thanks! We're grateful.
 Thanks / Needed the break. Life-savers
 Fantastic tradition. Absolutely charitable.
 You make a BIG difference. Thank you! Falling asleep.
 This is incredible! Thanks! Great service to the world.
 Great to see young men in great community service.