

# *Estuary Transit District*

~ Chester ~ Clinton ~ Deep River ~ Essex ~ Killingworth ~ Lyme ~ Old Lyme ~ Old Saybrook ~ Westbrook ~

March 9, 2009

Dear Transportation Committee:

I am writing to you in support of Senate Bill 1093 as the Executive Director of the Estuary Transit District (ETD). The ETD is the public transportation provider of the Estuary region, operating deviated fixed-route bus service as well as dial-a-ride service throughout Clinton, Chester, Deep River, Essex, Killingworth, Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook.

The ETD strongly supports the effort to continue funding the State Matching Grants to Municipalities for Demand Responsive Transportation for the Elderly and People with Disabilities (CGS 13b-38bb) in the upcoming fiscal year. With a total of \$3.9 million in matching state grants, the program funds about 136 towns to provide essential access to the community for people who are 60 years and older or who have a disability and may have limited or no access to public transportation.

In the Estuary region, the nine towns in the district assign their state matching grant allocations to the ETD to coordinate the transportation regionally. The funding from this program provides 100% of the operating funds for two dial-a-ride buses, primarily used by seniors and persons with disabilities. Without the state matching grant program, ETD will be forced to discontinue these two buses. With only four total dial-a-ride buses, the loss of these two would mean a large reduction in service and would leave many senior and disabled persons with no access to transportation.

The state matching grant program not only creates many regional transportation solutions to provide for the mobility and independence of the elderly and people with disabilities, but also helps their family members keep their jobs because their loved ones are being safely transported to their destinations, provides access to medical care that keeps seniors and people with disabilities healthy longer and living independently for a greater cost savings to the state, enables seniors and people with disabilities to spend their money and time in the marketplace, and improves their quality of life by providing them greater access to the community and friends. The elimination of funding for this program comes at a time when transit systems statewide are seeing increases in ridership due to fuel cost increases and the economic slowdown.

The Estuary Transit District and the senior and disabled persons in the Estuary region urge your support of the extension of this inexpensive yet highly utilized program into FY 2010.

Sincerely,



Joseph Comerford  
Executive Director