

Good morning, Chairman DeFronzo, Chairman Guerrero, and Distinguished Members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Steven Rief, and I am President of the Connecticut State Police Union. I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today. I am here to speak in **OPPOSITION** to:

GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BILL #6393
AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION, MOTOR VEHICLES,
HIGHWAY SAFETY AND SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND

Currently, under CGS 14-270c, the Department of Public Safety-Division of State Police has primary responsibility for conducting weigh scale operations at five out of the six fixed weigh stations (Danbury, Greenwich, Middletown, and both Waterford scales). The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has primary responsibility for the Union weigh station. Additionally, the State Police conduct portable scale operations statewide.

The Governor is proposing statutory revisions to remove the Department of Public Safety-State Police from these weigh stations and assign all responsibility of the state's weigh stations under the auspices of the Department of Motor Vehicles. This proposal would eliminate the State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit (Truck Squad), redeploying 21 State Troopers currently assigned to the Truck Squad to other patrol duties within the State Police. Troopers would no longer conduct fixed and portable weigh scale operations.

Troopers currently have this responsibility as we are the lead agency in the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) Vehicle Size and Weight Enforcement Program. Troopers also conduct Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) inspections. Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is the lead agency in MCSAP, while also conducting size and weight enforcement. The Vehicle Size and Weight Program is mandated by the Federal Highway Administration in order for the state to receive Federal-Aid Highway Funds. Connecticut will stand to lose millions of dollars in Federal-Aid Highway Funds should the state fail to be certified annually or if state laws related to size and weight are not adequately enforced.

This budget proposal will effectively cut in half the number of state employees who inspect, detect and deter dangerous commercial vehicles on our roadways as well as threats to homeland security. State Police have 21 dedicated Troopers in the Truck Squad, while DMV has 25 dedicated Inspectors in their program (the Governor's proposal also adds 2 additional DMV Inspectors for commercial vehicles). DMV does not have the manpower to cover the additional fixed weigh stations presently covered by State Troopers, while at the same time increasing statewide portable scale operations. This would result in a significant reduction in the number of MCSAP inspections conducted by DMV Inspectors and less vehicles weighed under the ConnDOT Size and Weight Enforcement Program.

In 2008, our Truck Squad Troopers weigh 338,000 Commercial Vehicles, inspected 3,537 vehicles and issued \$4.6 million in fines. The Governor's proposal projects a savings of \$1.6 million through a reduction in overtime. By eliminating the Truck Squad there will be additional lost revenue to the state. Less enforcement and less detection of unsafe vehicles equals fewer fines being written.

This proposal will result in quality of life issues as our roadways will become unsafe, our communities placed in jeopardy, and our families at grave risk of injury or death. Tragically, we have seen the end result of commercial vehicle accidents in the past like Avon Mountain, and on I-95 in East Lyme.

Our Troopers also have a significant role and responsibility regarding homeland security and anti-terrorism initiatives, which include detection and deterrence of Commercial Vehicles that may be utilized as weapons of mass destruction. Cutting state services, particularly those protecting the safety of citizens, is the wrong thing to do at any time.

Joining me today are Troopers assigned to the State Police Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Program.

I would like to close by thanking this committee for your attention to this important issue and I would be happy to answer questions and provide you with any further information.

March 6, 2009

CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION
Steven Rief, President