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Testimony

*In Support of Proposed S.B. No. 448
An Act Concerning The Installation Of Sound Barriers Along State Highways In Fairfield
County*

*Transportation Committee
February 24, 2009*

Dear Chairman DeFronzo, Chairman Guerrero and members of the Transportation Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 448, **AN ACT CONCERNING THE INSTALLATION OF SOUND BARRIERS ALONG STATE HIGHWAYS IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY.**

The neighborhoods that abut I-95 in Fairfield County are in dire need of sound barriers.

Vehicular traffic on our state highways in southern Connecticut has grown exponentially every year for decades. The noise from these vehicles has grown commensurately causing residents whose homes are sited close to the highways to suffer diminished quality of life. When then Governor Weicker ended the state's sound barrier program in 1991, the only caveat for adding new sound barriers was if the highway was widened, hence accommodating more cars that created more noise. I respectfully submit that in lower Fairfield County, the highway has not been widened but the number of vehicles on the highway traveling into and through Connecticut has increased many fold over the past thirty years as has the level of noise from these vehicles.

The need for sound barriers has grown beyond noise abatement. Increased crime is also a factor as homes that lie within 100ft or closer to I-95 are easy pickings for criminals that park on the highway shoulder, burglarize these homes and disappear back on the highway for an unnoticed get away. In addition, residents suffer from the pollution emanating from the vehicles; neighbors spend hours cleaning the exhaust soot off homes during spring cleanings. This pollution also creates a health hazard for

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children both at home and at school. A prime example is New Lebanon Elementary School located within a quarter mile of I-95 in Greenwich.

My constituents have been pleading for years, long before I arrived in Hartford, for sound barriers along this portion of the highway. I realize that sound barrier funds will be hard to come by this year but since this bill has been raised, I am asking for the committee to search the use of federal highway funds to restart Connecticut's sound barrier program.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Lile R. Gibbons

Lile R. Gibbons
State Representative