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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Transportation Committee
March 3, 2010

Testimony In Favor of

HB 5386 AAC The Safety of Pedestrians and Cyclists and the
Promotion of Healthy Communities

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Sierra Club Connecticut Chapter. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Sierra endorses efforts to promote non-vehicular transportation. We have been very pleased to see this Committee raise bills to encourage pedestrian and bicycling activities, and mass transit infrastructure and access. These bills will reduce our carbon and other pollutant emissions, reduce vehicle miles travelled, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, make us safer, encourage use and appreciation of open space, and promote the health of state residents.

It is clear from the language that the Regional Planning Organizations will play an important role. The Speaker's MORE Regional Entities Committee, on which I serve, has been examining the roles of RPOs, and how their functions as substitutes for county government can be increased. There are 15 RPOs: 8 Councils of Governments (COGs), 5 Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) and 2 Regional Councils of Elected Officials (RCEOs). Every town but one in the state is a member of an RPO. I strongly endorse an active role for the RPOs both in choosing grants to forward to DOT and in administering the grants. I suggest that language be added providing that submissions by two or more towns as regional projects be given added weight.

I also suggest that the language "safer access and egress to transit" in Section 1(d) be amended so that it is clear it applies to non-vehicular transit only. Otherwise, it could be interpreted to apply to road projects for cars.

Sierra strongly supports HB 5386.