



# Town of Orange, Connecticut

## Office of the First Selectman

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I write this letter of support for proposed Bill 6215 on behalf of the Town of Orange. The Town has worked with both a potential developer of a passenger rail stop and the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation for over a decade. The Town and State are both fortunate to have a developer still willing and wanting to move forward with this project in the current economic times.

I have been First Selectman for almost six years and have met five Commissioners of the Department of Transportation in that time. It seems that we have worked in a circle of questions over this project as a public private partnership. I feel that there has been a disconnect between Department of Transportation's job of providing the service to the user's of Connecticut's rail system and the Attorney General's Office to review and structure the proper agreement to bring this benefit for the State forward.

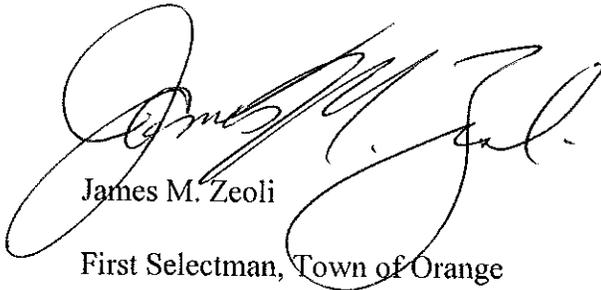
The shortage of parking in both Milford and New Haven has been acknowledged on numerous documents and in many statements the entire time this proposal has been under consideration. This rail stop has the availability of nine acres of property that will support flat parking of five hundred cars to start and the ability of a stacked parking area that will allow parking for an additional one thousand cars, this is close to the total of Milford and New Haven combined. This site will provide ease of parking for many from Orange, Woodbridge, Milford and many other surrounding communities needing to commute down to the New York and beyond on a daily basis. This is because of the many improvements that the Town, State and Federal funds have developed for the planning of the development of this hub area, the widening of Marsh Hill Rd, the new and widened bridge over I-95, the new entrance and exit ramps for I-95. This has all been done as part of a long term plan.

This part of Orange has been and continues to be developed by large office, corporate and industrial users. Yale University purchased the former Bayer site (137 acres) for University research and development. The Yale site directly abuts this Passenger Rail location and fully desire this be built for use by staff, students and people needing to access clinical research at the Campus. When fully operational Yale has stated they will have over 3,000 people on site. The United Illuminating Co. is constructing both Corporate and Operation's Centers across from this site employing over 1,000 people, commuting in on a daily basis. The PEZ Candy Corporate and manufacturing is within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of this site employing several hundred people. The Rt 1 bus is less than a mile away to provide both to and from transportation to the train station. This just names a few of the large employer's surrounding this area at this time. The Town of Orange did develop a Transit Oriented District zone for this area pending

implementation, until the Rail Stop is developed. Orange looks forward to that day with our planning just waiting in the wings.

While I appreciate the West Haven Station is coming along, that is with full State funding and adding additional burden onto the State's already heavy bond load. This does just the opposite, It allows the State to gain the benefit of a train stop for users and a developer is doing the heavy carrying and allows the State to work with a fixed number that will be reimbursed through user ticket fees. The Town of Orange will benefit from taxes generated by property of a private developer and no worry of receiving a PILOT payment from the State for a percentage less than what was originally structured. It also makes location and development in that surrounding area almost a Regional Development Plan since Orange, West Haven and Milford all meet in this location. The benefits will be spread between three communities, not just one as other choices have proven.

I hope I have given enough reason why this Committee should support Proposed Bill 6215 and I thank you in advance for your consideration.



James M. Zeoli  
First Selectman, Town of Orange