



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the  
Commissioner

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### **Public Hearing – February 28, 2011 Transportation Committee**

### **Testimony Submitted by Interim Commissioner Jeffrey A. Parker Department of Transportation**

### **Governor's Bill 6394 – An Act Concerning Fare Increases on the New Haven Line and the Elimination of the Transportation Strategy Board.**

The Department of Transportation (Department) strongly supports Governor's H.B. 6394, AAC Fare Increases on the New Haven Line and the Elimination of the Transportation Strategy Board.

The Governor's proposal delays the implementation of a 1.25% rail fare increase until January 1, 2012, and a 1% increase on January 1, 2013. This already legislated increase to support the new M-8 rail cars will reduce the amount of subsidy required for the New Haven Line by providing additional revenue and reducing the fare differential that currently exists between Metro North Railroad and the Department.

In order to support transportation related services, the bill increases various license and registration and transaction fees. Further, it proposes to increase over-sized and over-weight vehicle permit fees and establishes engineering fees associated with the permits which have not been changed since 1992. Rates vary based on the vehicle weight, height, and length.

Finally, the bill eliminates the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB), while retaining the defined transportation improvement areas, ConnDOT financing plan requirements and defined strategic transportation goals and projects. The TSB was created in 2001 to develop a transportation strategy that addressed critical state goals such as economic growth, environmental conservation, and quality of life. Since then, the Board has helped broaden the vision of how transportation should support these important state goals. In that same time, the Department of Transportation has been reorganized, changed the way it does business, evolved into a truly multimodal transportation agency, and expanded its mission to address broader state goals – including economic growth, environmental conservation, and quality of life. With these changes, the Department has been well positioned to assume the lead responsibility for strategy development as the bill proposes. Creation of the Five-Year Capitol Plan, the State Rail Plan and Long-Range Transportation plans are just a few examples of Department initiatives towards these goals.

This change is also in line with the findings of the February 2008 Critelli Commission (Commission) report on reform of the ConnDOT. The Commission felt that the strategic planning

function needed to be lodged in the agency itself, and recommended that the responsibility be shifted from the TSB to the Department.

The Department supports the Governor's proposal. Strategic planning needs to be a collaborative process with stakeholders, but it is done most effectively if the lead responsibility is assumed by the organization itself.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato, Legislative Program Manager for the Department of Transportation at (860) 594-3013.