



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the
Commissioner

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**Public Hearing – March 14, 2011
Transportation Committee**

**Testimony Submitted by Acting Commissioner James P. Redeker
Department of Transportation**

**H.B. 6573 - An Act Requiring the Identification of Refuge Areas for Use by Motor Vehicles
during Inclement Weather.**

The Department of Transportation (Department) has the following concerns with H.B. 6573:

- 1) In concept, the provision of refuge areas for motorists to get off the road during severe inclement weather is desirable. However, such areas have the potential to be frequented by large vehicles regardless of weather conditions. This type of usage is likely to become a significant maintenance burden that would go beyond just the erection of signs. The presence of large trucks will accelerate the deterioration of pavements not designed for heavy vehicle use, increase noise and air pollution complaints related to idling, and require frequent police patrols to keep these areas from functioning as unauthorized truck stops.
- 2) To be effective, the refuge areas themselves will need to be maintained (cleaned) as a priority over the roadway system. This will divert an already limited state and contractor workforce.
- 3) The bill holds harmless any private property owner who allows his or her property to be used as a refuge area during inclement weather. Presumably, this unassigned liability would fall to the State and increase the Department's exposure to unwarranted claims.
- 4) The October 1, 2011 date for the Department to prepare a plan for this program within available appropriations is insufficient. Due to limited resources and the approximately 692 miles of directional interstate highway mileage in Connecticut that the plan is expected to cover, a July 1, 2012 deadline is recommended.

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