



# 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. 6580 – An Act Establishing Requirements for Highway Use by Certain Vehicles and Repealing the Prohibition of Motorcycle Operation on the Wilbur Cross Parkway. (ConnDOT proposal)**

The Department of Transportation (Department) offers the following comments in support of H.B. 6580.

Sections 1 of the bill is proposed to clarify maximum length of certain truck combinations. Current federal law limits the states to mandatory permissible minimum lengths but does not establish maximum lengths. Individual state are reserved the right under federal law to permit maximum lengths. This proposal will establish maximum lengths in state law which will, in turn, assist State Police and motor vehicle inspectors with enforcement.

Section 2 also deals with permitting of oversized vehicles (mobile homes) and seeks to clarify that the mobile home is subject to the eighty foot length requirement. Current law states "a mobile home attached to a towing vehicle which has a combined length of one hundred feet or less if such towing vehicle has a length over eighty feet".

Section 3 of the bill is proposed to help address the current situation of drivers attempting to avoid weigh station scales by stopping on the highway prior to the vicinity of a scale and then waiting for the scale to close, so that the driver can pass the scale without detection, or stop to correct a violation prior to entering the scale. Enforcement officers report a large number of drivers committing this offense. Many of these vehicles and drivers possess serious safety violations, such as log book violations, weapons violations, possession of intoxicating substances, critically defective equipment, and other violations.

Section 4 of the bill increases the penalty for forging an oversize/overweight vehicle permit commensurate with our surrounding states. Since permits are issued by computer, the Department is experiencing more forged permits incidents. By forging a permit, drivers are traveling in restricted areas, over restricted bridges and causing serious damage to the State's transportation infrastructure.

Section 5: Section 13a-26 paragraph (f) restricts the use of the Wilbur Cross and Merritt Parkways to noncommercial vehicles, with limited exceptions, and requires the State Traffic Commission (STC) to adopt regulations in order to fully carry out the prohibition. CGS 13a-27 further restricts the Wilbur Cross Parkway to noncommercial **automotive** vehicular use. It is not

clear why this additional restriction was instituted for the Wilbur Cross Parkway, however one possibility is that before the Sikorsky Bridge was replaced, the open grated deck may have caused a safety concern for motorcycles and therefore the wording was intended to prohibit their use of the parkway.

The regulations adopted by the STC currently do not allow for motorcycle use on either the Wilbur Cross or Merritt Parkways. The highways are contiguous and thus it is not practical to restrict their use on just the Wilbur Cross Parkway. The Sikorsky Bridge deck is now a paved surface and thus the possible safety concerns for motorcycles associated with an open grated deck no longer exist. Consequently, there is no longer a need to restrict motorcycle usage on the Wilbur Cross Parkway. Repealing of Section 13a-27 would then allow the STC to revise its regulations to allow motorcycles on both the Wilbur Cross and Merritt Parkways. .

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