



Transportation Committee Public Hearing
February 18, 2011

Submitted by: Letitia L. Ferguson, Outreach Director

In Opposition to: SB 800 AA Restoring Commuter Rail Service from Waterbury to Hartford

Connecticut Fund for the Environment ("CFE") is Connecticut's non-profit environmental advocate, with over 7,300 members statewide. For over thirty years, CFE has fought to protect and preserve Connecticut's health and environment.

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera and members of the Transportation Committee, Connecticut Fund for the Environment offers this testimony regarding Senate Bill No. 800, An Act Restoring Commuter Rail Service from Waterbury to Hartford.

Busways and commuter rails are both key parts of a comprehensive transit infrastructure that is need in Connecticut. We ask that you oppose SB 800, which proposes defunding the ready-to-build Busway in favor of a rail project that is years away and would not serve the needs of commuters now. It poses a false choice between transit options. We urge you to support the Busway for the following reasons.

- The New Britain to Hartford Bus Rapid Transit project (the Busway) will reduce congestion on overcrowded highways. Buses using this corridor will bypass congestion on arterial streets and Interstate 84, reducing congestion and emissions pollution. Riding a bus instead of driving alone for a 20-mile round trip commute to the workplace can reduce 4,800 pounds of CO2 emissions per year (APTA). Over 24 million excess gallons of fuel were consumed in 2007 due to congestion in Connecticut (Urban Mobility Report, (TTI).
- This project will permit bus access at intermediate points, so circulator bus routes can readily serve surrounding neighborhoods and then use the busway, thus providing a one-seat ride. Research supporting this project shows that it will provide convenient, subway-like service during peak hours and offer access to employment centers and connectivity to major transportation centers. It is important to note that the busway is designed as an integrated part of a larger state and regional transportation system.
- The resulting commuter hubs at Busway depots will create precisely the economic development opportunities so needed in our state. Transportation Oriented Development is widely recognized as the most productive form of community development.
- The Hartford-New Britain Busway, which is funded through a combination of 80% federal funding and 20% state funding, is included in President Obama's budget for transportation infrastructure improvement. Connecticut should act now to bring this project to completion, and to ensure future Federal transportation infrastructure funding availability.

Thank you for your consideration and for your work to improve Connecticut's transportation network.

Letitia L. Ferguson, Outreach Director