

BILL NO. 800

I come to testify in strong support of Bill No. 800 to convert the Hartford-New Britain Busway to Hartford-Waterbury commuter rail. My name is Peter E. Lynch. I am from Old Saybrook, CT and, in December 2010, retired from 4 decades of railroad infrastructure and operations management; the last 22 years in CT and MA. In 2008 my good friend Senator Eileen Daily asked me to look into this project because it was severely short of money: \$300 million short in 2008 and today. Conversion of this project to rail solves the Busway funding problem, as well as considerably helps fund two other Hartford projects that occupy the same 4,000 ft. long corridor in Hartford: New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail and I-84 Aetna Viaduct, both of which are short of funds. Some important information:

- Federal Transit Administrator wrote a letter on January 29, 2010 saying the Busway may be converted to rail with appropriate planning. This was done in Houston recently.
- Of the \$275 million in New Start Federal funding, \$175 million is sufficient to restore/rehab the railroad from Newington to New Britain to Waterbury and purchase 4 new trainsets. This allows \$100 million for Newington-Hartford rail infrastructure that both projects would share.
- Cost estimates and Hartford-New Britain-Bristol-Waterbury train schedules have been drafted. FRA permits approval for restoration of previously removed track on existing right-of-way within 30 days so that portion of planning is simplified. Ridership estimates can be prepared quickly.
- This service can join the Bridgeport-Waterbury service to connect these Central CT locations to Stamford and New York City plus connect Naugatuck Valley communities of Derby, Shelton, Ansonia, Seymour, Beacon Falls and Naugatuck to Hartford. Hartford-Waterbury rail can serve all the Busway communities and would serve 6 times more citizens for ½ the Busway cost.
- Transit time via rail from/to Hartford and New Britain, Plainville, Bristol and Waterbury would be 30%-40% faster than via the Busway and offers a significant transit alternative to I-84. If service were established ahead of I-84 construction, I-84 congestion would be mitigated.
- This simplifies the rehabilitation of I-84 in Hartford because the Busway would not be there. If the railroad were relocated to the west side of 4,000 ft. corridor ahead of I-84, dropping I-84 to ground level for a distance of 4,000 ft. ought to be rather simple. It would seem appropriate to seek High Speed Rail funding to relocate the railroad because the planned new route would eliminate over a mile of 20 MPH in the Hartford station area due to the "kink," the curvature in the railroad as it threads its way in and out of Hartford station.

How much all three projects cost depends upon how well they are planned and coordinated. If the 1889 Hartford station viaduct railroad is rebuilt and the Busway is added to this corridor and then must be removed and relocated to accommodate new I-84, it will cost much more and take much longer to plan and build than if all three are efficiently coordinated. Rather than current estimates that show \$2.5 billion cost over 10-15 years, CT ought to be able to do this over three years for about \$1 billion, 80% of which we already have.