

**President
Motor Transport Association of Connecticut
Before
The Joint Committee on Transportation
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MICHAEL J. RILEY
PRESIDENT

I am Michael J. Riley, President of Motor Transport Association of Connecticut (MTAC), a statewide trade association, which represents around 1,000 companies that operate commercial motor vehicles in and through the state of Connecticut. Our membership includes freight haulers, movers of household goods, construction companies, distributors, tank truck operators and hundreds of companies that use trucks in their business and firms that provide goods and services to truck owners.

**HB 6217 AN ACT ENCOURAGING PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THE
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE STATE**

MTAC opposes this bill.

This bill allows DOT, DPW and OPM to solicit proposals and enter into contracts with private sector interests to build, finance, operate, maintain, purchase, lease or maintain transportation facilities, including roads, airports, seaports, parking facilities, rail facilities and similar facilities. It also allows these agencies to consider unsolicited proposals to purchase currently owned state assets and to convert them into profit making ventures for private interests. Also, the agencies develop the procurement process and competitive bidding processes. There is no mention of the legislature having any role to play. This is very thin ice. It is impossible to discern from reading this bill what deals might be contemplated. Does this mean that these agencies could get together and sell Bradley Airport, Route 8, the Port of New London, Connecticut's interests in Metro North, or the Rock Hill Ferry? Privatization of state facilities is a risk fraught enterprise and one that requires caution and prudence. This bill does not provide either.



HB 6568 AN ACT CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF VEHICLES OF OVER-DIMENSION
REQUIRING A SPECIAL PERMIT DUE TO THE WIDTH OR LENGTH OF SUCH VEHICLES

MTAC supports this bill.

Section 1. Allows any person operating a vehicle with an over-dimension permitted loads to go off the approved route to seek shelter during inclement weather and to return to the approved route after the inclement weather has ended. It also allows a permitted vehicle to continue beyond the hours stated in the permit, if it is delayed by inclement weather, so that it can complete its trip.

Section 2. Allows any person who is operating a vehicle with an over-dimension permitted load to continue to travel until he reaches the destination specified in the permit, if he has been delayed by traffic congestion or incidents.

These two provisions are necessary to avoid expensive tickets which result from being off route or beyond the time specified in the permit because of circumstances totally beyond the control of the operator. The vehicle, the load, the driver, the main route and the destinations remain the same as authorized in the permit. Tickets for over-dimension violations can easily run into thousands of dollars. These are fair proposals which provide that real world actions do not jeopardize innocent operators from gotcha enforcement.

HB 6569 AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE
INFORMATION SYSTEMS NETWORKS PROGRAM

MTAC Supports this Bill

The Commercial Vehicle Information Systems Networks Program is a federally funded program with two main objectives; first to improve the quality and quantity of truck inspection programs and secondly to help the industry benefit from more efficiency in obtaining the many credentials needed to operate a truck legally in this country.

Connecticut's CVISN program is overseen by a unique interdepartmental team of representatives from the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Revenue Services, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Information Technology. As the industry representative to this group, I have participated in its activities for over 15 years.

Connecticut has a nationally recognized program of commercial vehicle enforcement. We can all be proud that our state has made great strides in improving the technology for truck inspection and weighing operations throughout the state. Our truck inspection teams are very well equipped and trained.

However, the progress in the area of credentialing has been slow. Our objective, as an industry, is to do all of our credentialing electronically. We want, 24-7, to apply for, have approved, pay for, and obtain credentials for registration, over-dimension permitting and fuel tax payments.

This bill would require the Commissioners of the Departments of Transportation, Motor Vehicles, and Revenue Services, to prepare a quarterly report on the progress of the Commercial Vehicle Information Systems Networks program with regard to electronic credentialing of commercial motor vehicles. The report would go to this committee whom I now enlist in our effort to bring the truck credentialing program in Connecticut into the twentieth century

HB 6570 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PENALTY FOR TEXTING WHILE OPERATING A COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE

MTAC supports the prohibition against texting in all vehicles.

USDOT Secretary Raymond LaHood has initiated a concerted campaign against texting in all motor vehicles. When I have asked truck drivers to tell me the most dangerous thing they see on the highways, a large percentage of them say talking on cell phones and texting. MTAC supports strong laws and sanctions against people who text while driving.

Before we endorse the specific language in HB 6570, we would like to have an opportunity to discuss it with the Department of Motor Vehicles whom we presume requested it. Section 14-296aa currently bans the use of cell phones and texting from all motor vehicles. Therefore, we would like to understand why this bill is necessary. Also, the reason for the language in (I) at the end of this bill is also something we would like to discuss with DMV.

HB 6571 AN ACT REQUIRING AN ANALYSIS OF THE CORROSIVE EFFECTS OF CHEMICAL ROAD TREATMENTS

MTAC supports this bill.

Many of MTAC members have noticed that the new substances being used to prevent snow and ice from accumulating on our highways have done damage to their trucks. These new products have definitely improved the condition of our highways during winter storms. This year has provided ample opportunity for the DOT to demonstrate it's effectiveness in keeping traffic flowing even during the worst of conditions. And these new products have definitely helped do the job.

However, the substances have corroded electrical components, deteriorated brake parts and even caused corrosion on the main frame of many vehicles. These problems are well documented and have become an additional cost of doing business as well as possibly compromised the safety of the motoring public. Additionally, some of my members have questioned how these substances might affect the structural members and concrete of bridges and other infrastructure, as well as the effects which runoff might have upon the water shed in this state.

Therefore, this bill directs the Department of Transportation to conduct an analysis of the corrosive effects of chemical treatments on Connecticut's motor vehicles, infrastructure and the environment. It asks that the department consider the cost of corrosion created by the chemical road treatments, and requests an analysis of alternative road treatment techniques and products. This report would be submitted to this committee on or before January 1, 2012.

HB 6572 AN ACT CONCERNING THE EVALUATION OF THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SAFETY RECORD OF A PERSON, FIRM OR CORPORATION BIDDING FOR A STATE CONTRACT

MTAC supports this bill.

This bill provides that, before any individual or company is disqualified from bidding or performing under a state contract, due to the results of any preliminary evaluation of the commercial vehicle safety record of such person or company, they are entitled to a second evaluation. Currently, the system used by the Department of Motor Vehicles to evaluate the safety record of companies is unfair and does not account for anything but truck inspections which result in the findings of defects. No credit is given for trucks which are not inspected because they are waived through the scale house. This proposal would provide a company with an opportunity to have a fairer, more accurate and up-to-date evaluation of its safety record. Connecticut companies and Connecticut employees should not lose state work because of an inaccurate and unfair system of evaluation.

HB 6573 AN ACT REQUIRING THE IDENTIFICATION OF REFUGE AREAS FOR USE BY MOTOR VEHICLES DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

MTAC supports this bill.

On a clear night in August, there are not enough places in the State of Connecticut for truck drivers from other states to get their legally mandated rest periods. When a winter storm drives truckers off the highways this shortage becomes even more acute.

It has been documented by two studies that the State of Connecticut needs at least 1,200 more truck parking areas than it currently has. Every night but Saturday, every public and private truck parking area is occupied and still 1,200 truckers have to improvise to find a safe place for them to park and to rest. The likelihood of additional private spaces is not high because of NIMBY opposition to the construction of additional truck service plazas. CONNDOT has made an effort to improve the capacity at its roadside

facilities by reconfiguring and planning more parking spaces as it renovates the state highway service areas. However, the shortage of truck parking areas in this state continues to be a major problem.

The problem is even more serious when winter weather hits. This winter's storms presented real challenges to truckers who, doing the right and safe thing, pulled off the highway to wait out the weather. They quickly realized that there are very few spots where trucks are welcome to find safe refuge.

Therefore, this bill requires that DOT identify locations near interstate highways which could serve as refuge areas during inclement weather. These areas could include state parks, commuter parking lots, parking areas at state facilities and even, with the owner's approval, private property, if the owner was indemnified against liability related to the use of his property for this purpose. Areas of refuge would be made available at the order of the Governor and only then.

This bill requires DOT to prepare a plan, within available appropriations, to identify locations that might be used as refuge areas during inclement weather as well as proposed methods, policies and procedures for their use. The plan would be submitted to this committee.

HB 6578 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS WITH STATE AGENCIES

MTAC supports this bill.

Connecticut law currently makes it illegal for anyone to charge an additional fee for a credit card transaction. Yet, as I talk to state agencies about establishing electronic payment as the way for truckers to pay for their legally required credentials, I am regularly told that a fee would have to be charged for an electronic transaction. It is totally unacceptable that the citizens of this state be required to pay more money to interact with this state electronically than it is to do so in person or the mail. This bill simply says that no state agency could charge a fee for the performance of electronic transactions.

HB 6579 AN ACT CONCERNING HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BANS CONCERNING HIGHWAY

MTAC supports this bill.

This bill states that the order to close any highway or to ban certain vehicles must be issued by the Governor and that the Governor make efforts to provide notice in advance of such closure, including an estimate of the duration of such closure and any other related information. That the Governor disseminate information, as to the specifics of the closure, to the public through the press, radio, television and other means. Nothing in this bill would affect the ability of law enforcement or emergency personnel to close a specific section of a highway due to an accident or other emergency.

HB 6581 AN ACT MAKING REVISIONS TO MOTOR VEHICLE STATUTES

MTAC would like to work with the Committee and the Department of Motor Vehicles to clearly understand the many provisions of this bill and is prepared to support it, assuming no anticipated problems.