



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the
Commissioner

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Public Hearing – March 7, 2011 Transportation Committee

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

S.B. 714 – An Act Requiring “Welcome Home” Messages for Returning Connecticut Military Units to be Displayed on Overhead Highway Electronic Sign Boards.

Although very well intentioned, The Department of Transportation (Department) is opposed to S.B. 714 as written. The electronic highway signs, also known as changeable message signs (CMS), are operated by the Department and used according to policies developed by the agency and guidance set forth by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), including the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). These policies and guidelines prohibit the use of CMS for general informational messages such as the "welcome home" messages set forth in the bill.

FHWA issued a Policy Memorandum on January 19, 2001 that details the the appropriate use of CMS (attached). The Policy memorandum states "The FHWA supports the use of a CMS as a traffic control device to safely and efficiently manage traffic by informing motorists of roadway conditions and required actions to perform. The appropriate use of a CMS and other types of real-time displays should be limited to managing travel, controlling and diverting traffic, identifying current and anticipated roadway conditions, or regulating access to specific lanes or the entire roadway. The use of a CMS for the display of general public information or other nonessential messages is discouraged. Only essential messages should be displayed on a CMS."

It further indicates "The improper operation and display of outdated or inaccurate information on a CMS has the potential to adversely affect traffic flow. Inaccurate, incomprehensible, or inappropriate information displayed on a CMS can also cause motorists to question the credibility and ignore all CMS messages. The CMS message should be continuously updated to display the action required by motorists, or to present essential information related to either the current or expected future roadway conditions."

Additionally, Section 2L.01 of the 2009 edition of the MUTCD states that "Except as provided in Paragraph 2 of Section 2L.02, changeable message signs shall display only traffic operational, regulatory, warning and guidance information. Advertising Messages shall not be displayed on changeable message signs or its supports or other equipment." Paragraph 2 of Section 2L.02 further states "Changeable message signs may be used by State and local highway agencies to display safety messages, transportation-related messages, emergency homeland security messages, and America's missing: Broadcast Emergency Response (AMBER) alert messages.

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