



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE CLARK J. CHAPIN
SIXTY-SEVENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING ROOM 4200
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 5102 An Act Requiring the Commissioner of Transportation to Attend Certain Public Hearings Concerning Railroad Crossings At-Grade

Transportation Committee Public Hearing February 18, 2011

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 5102, An Act Requiring the Commissioner of Transportation to Attend Certain Public Hearings Concerning Railroad Crossings At-Grade. This bill is intended to heighten the awareness of the Department of Transportation as to safety concerns being expressed by residents regarding the deteriorating condition of at-grade rail crossings.

New Milford's legislative delegation and local officials have been in communication with ConnDOT on numerous occasions over the last several years regarding the condition of such a crossing on Bridge Street/Route 202 in New Milford. This particular crossing is used by over 17,000 motorists each day. The rough condition causes motor vehicle operators to swerve toward the sidewalks on each side, endangering pedestrians.

I have also received complaints as recently as this week regarding damage done to motor vehicle front ends. In one instance, a motorist turned in a piece of metal from the crossing which had become lodged underneath her car.

In my communications with ConnDOT, it was suggested that funds from the Fix-it-First program would be an appropriate funding mechanism for such repairs. Several months ago, I requested that funds for this program be allocated by the State Bond Commission. I was informed that funds had already been released and it was up to the agency to determine which projects rose to a priority level suitable for funding.

As stated earlier, passage of HB 5102 may help demonstrate to ConnDOT officials that unsafe conditions of at-grade rail crossings both exist and need to be remedied. Whether those funds come from the Fix-it-First program or elsewhere, Connecticut motorists should be able to travel our state's highways in a safe manner and without fear of causing damage to their vehicles.

Thank you for giving consideration to favorable passage of HB 5102. As always, I am happy to provide additional information or answer any questions.