



SENATE BILL 700 TESTIMONY

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you this morning. My name is Ralph Eno. I am First Selectman in the Town of Lyme and a member of the board of directors of the Estuary Transit District, which is also referred to as 9 Town Transit. I am here to testify in favor of Senate Bill 700, **"AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FOR MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL "DIAL-A-RIDE" PROGRAMS.**

The Municipal Grant Program provides \$146,000 in annual funding to our regional transit district which translates into more than four thousand hours of door-to-door transportation services for the elderly and disabled every year.

In 2010, MGP funded services provided some 7,000 passenger trips to more than 700 individual users in our service area. Lyme residents are exclusively reliant on dial-a-ride as there is no fixed route service in my town. This is also the case in Killingworth, the other rural town in our nine town region.

Further, the MPG also covers the cost of a part time dispatch position in our operations center at a cost of about \$40,000 a year. I have attached a breakdown of "trips by purpose" for your review.

The proposed 25 per cent grant cut would force a reduction of four hours of service per day meaning seniors and disabled passengers would see their ability to access work, medical appointments and adult day care programs radically constricted. The alternative would be to make up the shortfall with additional billings to our member towns.

It seems both ironic and self-defeating as municipalities are being urged to seek cost effective regional approaches to providing services that a time tested grant enabling this approach is being cut.

We're talking about cutting a million dollars out of a four million dollar grant. That is a big hit. Our transit district board respectfully suggests that there ought to be alternative opportunities for savings which could be affected within the Department of Transportation's public transportation budget which would not have such a dramatic, harmful impact on such a vulnerable segment of our society. A 25 per cent cut in a four million dollar grant does not seem to be representative of a shared sacrifice.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I would be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

TRIPS BY PURPOSE

Adult Daycare	34%
Education	3%
Medical	11%
Personal/Misc	19%
Shopping	12%
Social/Senior Ctr	5%
Work	16%