

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION

Written Testimony

Submitted by Mary Tomolonius, Executive Director

Transportation Committee

February 18, 2011

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera and members of the Transportation Committee, on behalf of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT) I write in opposition to SB 800, An Act Restoring Commuter Rail Service from Waterbury to Hartford.

- This process began in 1997 when the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and the Central Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA) began a Major Investment Study (MIS) to develop a plan to alleviate congestion on the Interstate 84 West corridor. Since that project began there've been years of meetings, analysis, budgeting, planning, educating, design work, discussing, and public hearings culminating in the historic New Britain-Hartford Busway Project. This would be Connecticut's first busway. The 9.4 mile long *bus only roadway*, includes 11 stations, level boarding platforms, real time bus information, and off vehicle fare payment, will provide fast and reliable service and bring true rapid transit to the Hartford region.
- The busway is the right transit improvement for a community with the population and density of the Hartford region. Buses can operate both on the busway and on local streets, giving riders a one seat ride from home to their destination.
- Bus transportation is affordable, reduces congestion, fuel consumption and carbon footprint. This project is a perfect example of Transit oriented development that will help spur neighborhood revitalization.
- After years of planning, this project is just months away from receiving a federal new starts grant for construction.
- The process for securing federal funding for a transit project is long and arduous. The busway is almost to the finish line. Stopping it now for another proposal will mean going back to the drawing board with years of study and it is very likely that we will not see true improvements to our public transportation system for another generation.
- Stopping the busway means that we have nothing to offer to deal with congestion on I-84 west of Hartford.

The American Transportation Transportation Association estimates that \$9,242 is the average yearly savings for an individual riding the bus. The benefits of the New Britain-Hartford Busway Project are clear. I would urge each of you to oppose SB 800. Let's show our citizens we are serious about providing alternative transportation options. Thank you.

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