

**Opposing Proposed Bill 800  
An Act Restoring Commuter Rail Service from Waterbury to Hartford**

Testimony by:  
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To the Transportation Committee:

I would like to share the following letter to the editor that I wrote and that was published in the New Britain Herald.

The proposed New Britain/Hartford busway has become a hot topic in Newington recently, with the Town Council, on which I serve, taking a vote at its last meeting to send a letter to Gov. Dannel Malloy noting its opposition to a busway and its support for a light railway system. Had I been at that meeting, where the busway topic was added to the agenda by a waiver of the rules, I would have voiced my support for the project.

While the busway has increased in cost since it was first proposed, it continues to be the most cost-effective solution to the congestion on Interstate 84 west of Hartford. This is the most congested corridor in the Hartford region, accounting for more than 50 percent of all freeway congestion in the region.

Some have forgotten that the busway proposal originated as a study of congestion on I-84. Numerous possible solutions were examined including expanding the highway, making improvements on other roadways and building transit improvements.

The busway, even though it will require an annual operating subsidy (as does all public transit) was the clear preferred alternative. State Department of Transportation studies have shown that rail would require an operating subsidy five times that of the busway.

Currently Newington has the unique advantage of being part of both the busway and commuter railway. We don't have to choose one! The proposed New Haven, Hartford, Springfield commuter rail proposal, currently being pursued by the Connecticut DOT with federal and state funding, will place a rail station in Newington, at the location of Newington Junction. This station will allow for transfers between the busway and the commuter rail line. Newington will now be a central boarding point for local commuters going to New York City, Boston, and all points in-between. These plans will provide a huge boost to our development at the National Welding site, adjacent properties and give our town many economic opportunities in the future.

The goal of the busway will be to allow commuters to avoid the awful I-84 traffic, save on gas consumption and reduce greenhouse emissions. Buses will arrive at the stations every five minutes during peak hours, and a trip from the Newington station to Hartford will only take 10 minutes. All buses will be hybrid and clean fuel vehicles and equipped with bike racks. The creation of a bike trail from New Britain to Newington will give residents another traveling option. In addition to going to downtown Hartford, the busway will tie in many important destinations for Greater Hartford residents including Westfarms Mall, University of Connecticut Health Center, Hartford Hospital, and Central Connecticut State University. Rail would not give us this flexibility.