

Testimony by Kevin Maloney on Governor's Bill #5027  
March 1, 2012

My name is Kevin Maloney and I reside at 4016 Mountain Road in West Suffield. I am the Chairman of the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission (CPTC), one of the groups that our Governor is proposing to disband because, in his words, "they no longer fit today's needs or their functions can be or already are served by another state body that already exists". With all due respect to the Governor, the CPTC falls into neither of those categories.

Our Commission consists of eleven gubernatorial appointments and eight legislative appointments, all volunteers, as well as representatives from other state agencies. These volunteers receive no compensation other than travel reimbursement and they consist of individuals with disabilities, public transportation users and providers, freight carriers, labor organizations involved with public transportation, state legislators, and state agencies responsible for energy and environment. Our budget averages about twelve thousand dollars a year, the majority of which is reimbursed by federal funding. In addition to its monthly meetings, the Commission travels throughout the state eight times a year conducting public hearings in order to give local and regional transportation entities and, most importantly, the general public the opportunity to voice their needs and their opinions about the state of public transportation here in Connecticut. The information gathered at these hearings is distilled into an annual report which is submitted together with our recommendations to the Governor, the Department of Transportation and the Transportation Committee. To the best of my knowledge, we are at this juncture the only functioning body that provides this independent conduit for public comment, a transportation ombudsman if you will.

During my four year tenure with the Commission, I have observed that it has in fact made a difference on a number of transportation issues. Most recently, we were instrumental in the reopening of the Wilton train station and we brought attention to the fact that the plan to move the bus pulse point in Waterbury to the proposed multi-modal center was seriously flawed. The Mayor of Waterbury agreed with that conclusion after reading our report, and that proposal is presently being reconsidered. Speaking of Waterbury, we were also instrumental in bringing attention to the fact that the lack of evening bus service in the Waterbury area was adversely impacting the population at large, but in particular the students at the Naugatuck Valley Community College, some of whom gave testimony to that effect at one of our hearings. Our 2011 hearings pointed out among other things the need for improved communication between the DOT and other public transportation stakeholders. These are but a few of the important issues that the CPTC has fleshed out over the years.

I am here today to request your support for the removal of the references to the CPTC in sections 12, 15 & 57 of the Governor's Bill #5027; however, that's not all I'm asking of you. At the inception of the Commission, the Department of Transportation was mandated to respond in writing to the recommendations contained in our annual report. However, in 2008 we were informed by the D.O.T. that an amendment had been passed by the Legislature in 2003 eliminating that mandate, and they were no longer going to respond to our reports. So at this juncture, we put a lot of effort into our annual report without any assurance that our recommendations will even be reviewed, much less acted upon. We ask your support for the reinstatement of that mandate.