



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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QUESTIONS FOR METRO NORTH COMMUTER COUNCIL NOMINEE

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METRO NORTH NEW HAVEN RAIL COMMUTER COUNCIL (CGS § 13B-212B, 212C)

- Studies and investigates all aspects of the daily operation of the New Haven commuter railroad line.
- Monitors the rail line's performance and recommends changes to improve its efficiency and quality of service. The council may request, and receive from any department, agency, or political subdivision of the state any assistance and data it requests to properly carry out its duties.
- Annually makes findings and recommendations to the governor, transportation commissioner, Connecticut Public Transportation Commission, General Assembly, the New York Metro North Rail Commuter Council, and the Management Advisory Board and Office of the Inspector General of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in New York.

NOMINEE QUESTIONS

1. As you may know, a number of commuters and legislators are unhappy that the recent Metro North fare increase will go into the Special Transportation Fund, and not be dedicated to rail improvements. Several legislators have introduced a bill this session (Proposed Bill 5067) that would require revenue from the increased bus and rail fares to be used “for upgrades to bus and rail service operations and maintenance.” Do you support such legislation? Will the rail fare increase provide enough revenue to both fund needed upgrades and support current operations and maintenance?
2. Last year was a trying one for commuters and Metro North, as winter snow storms put a number of cars out of service and extreme summer heat left commuters on one train stranded without power, water, or information. DOT and Metro North have since agreed on a nine point pledge to commuters. Among other things, Metro North promises immediate assistance in emergencies, accurate and timely information, and courteous employees. Are you familiar with the pledge? If so, are you satisfied with it, or are there additional issues you think it should address? How can the state ensure Metro North lives up to the pledge?
3. According to a recent customer survey, customer satisfaction with Metro North is at 81%, the lowest level ever. What can the council do to restore confidence in Metro North service?
4. Last year’s problems led some to suggest that the state replace Metro North with another operating agency, or at least improve state oversight. What can the state do to improve Metro North’s performance and better monitor its operations?
5. In the council’s 2011 annual report, as in previous reports, the lack of communication between riders, Metro North, and DOT is once again the biggest single issue. Why do you think this issue seems so intractable? What can be done to improve communications between the line, commuters, and the state?
6. Can the council play a greater part in trying to resolve some of the issues that appear to constrain the state's ability to expand service on Shore Line East? How do you think the interests of rail

commuters and recreational marine traffic can best be accommodated?

7. When commuter service is operating on the New Haven Line, Shore Line East, and the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield corridor, what is the ideal scenario for integrating these services? Are there alternatives not being considered at present that you think should be?
8. What types of transit-oriented development around existing and new rail stations do you think would have the greatest benefit for those currently riding the trains and for attracting new riders? What can the council do to promote these developments?
9. What are the issues that may be hampering the development of better service on the branch lines, in particular the Danbury and Waterbury branches?
10. Station parking issues continue as one of the most difficult problems for the New Haven Line and Shore Line East services. What progress do you think has been made on solving station parking problems? What remains to be done?
11. Are you satisfied with the rate at which the new M8 cars are entering service?

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