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Testimony in Support of HB 6024 Transportation Committee February 4, 2013

Chairmen Maynard and Guerrera, Ranking Members Boucher and Scribner, and members of the Transportation Committee, the House Republican Caucus appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 6024: *An Act Concerning Fuel-Efficient Vehicles and the Minimum Vehicle Occupancy Requirements of the State's HOV Lanes.*

This bill proposes to allow fuel-efficient vehicles to travel in HOV lanes without having to meet vehicle occupancy requirements. These vehicles would have to meet certain environmental standards and the operator would pay an annual user fee to participate in the program. All funds collected from the program would be dedicated to improving the state's transportation infrastructure.

Connecticut's transportation infrastructure is in need of significant repair and increasingly the funds are not available to make the necessary improvements. With soaring deficits on both the state and national levels, the funds available for transit improvements are shrinking fast. For this reason, it is important that we look at different ways to reduce the stress on our transportation system.

This program would help to reduce congestion and the degradation of the state's highways by moving drivers out of regular lanes and into HOV lanes. Additionally, the user fees generated from this program would provide a much needed funding source for required maintenance of the state's highways and bridges.

Furthermore, this program would provide an incentive for drivers to purchase fuel-efficient vehicles. An increase of these vehicles on the roads would reduce pollution and improve air quality.

I respectfully ask the committee to give thorough consideration of this proposal as a way to help improve our roads and the environment. Thank you.