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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair*

Transportation Committee
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Testimony In Favor of
SB 191 AAC the Penalty for Causing Harm to a Vulnerable User of a Public Way

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Transportation in America has become dominated by the car. Dependence on the private auto has led us to:

- define our land use patterns (suburban sprawl)
- create air pollution (NOx, SOx, particulates)
- contribute significantly to climate change
- use vast quantities of fossil fuels
- overly rely on untrustworthy sources of foreign oil
- damage our economy through imbalances of trade
- damage the health of our citizens

It is the Sierra Club policy to mitigate the environmental harm caused by our excessive reliance on cars by encouraging non-vehicular travel whenever possible.

This legislature has passed a series of bills which support pedestrians and bicyclists, including the 2009 Complete Streets legislation, which requires a one percent set aside for transportation projects; creation of the Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board; and establishment of the three foot minimum passing distance rule. We have constructed many connected linear trails in the state which provide alternate transportation routes.

SB 191 makes travel safer for pedestrians, bicyclists and other "vulnerable users" by sensitizing vehicle drivers to the consequences of injuring them. It is the latest in this series of efforts to encourage non-vehicular travel, and so receives a strong Sierra Club endorsement.