



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the  
Commissioner

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**Public Hearing – February 20, 2013**  
**Transportation Committee**

**Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Jim Redeker**  
**Department of Transportation**

**Proposed S.B. 300 – An Act Authorizing the Use of High-Occupancy Vehicle Lanes by all Vehicles During Rush Hour.**

The high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in Connecticut were built with federal funds and are subject to federal statutes and regulations on how the lanes may be used. Current federal statutes allow only a few categories of exceptions to high occupancy vehicles - defined as a vehicle with minimum of two or more occupants or a motorcycle. The exceptions are:

- Public transportation vehicles that are not in service. (i.e., out-of-service)
- Low emission and energy-efficient vehicles such as hybrids.
- High Occupancy Toll or HOT vehicles. (These are vehicles that do not meet the minimum occupancy requirement but are allowed to use the HOV facility if they pay a toll to do so, providing the increase use does not significantly degrade service for high occupant vehicles).

The current federal transportation legislation, MAP -21 (Section 1514) requires States to toll vehicles traveling on HOV facilities exempt from the minimum occupancy requirements (except for bicycles, motorcycles, and low emission and energy-efficient vehicles).

If vehicles are tolled, the State is encouraged under federal law to work with local Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division Office in submitting certifications before allowing any exceptions to the use of HOV facilities. The Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) would be required to submit an annual certification to FHWA, monitor the performance and service levels of the HOV lanes, and establish enforcement measures. The use of toll revenues is also restricted under MAP-21. Use of single occupant vehicles (SOV) on the HOV lanes during the four to six o'clock evening hours would also be discontinued if the presence of the SOVs has degraded the operation of the facility.

A mechanism to establish a tolling fee, the collection of tolls, and the accounting of revenues would need to be established. Allowing SOVs on the HOV lanes would require the coordination of the Departments of Public Safety, Transportation, and Revenue Services. At this time, there is not an estimated cost to initiate such a measure.

Allowing use of the HOV by all vehicles would negate the purpose and intent of the HOV lanes. The HOV lanes are intended to carry more people in fewer vehicles without congestion, thereby increasing travel time.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato, Legislative Program Manager for the Department of Transportation, at (860) 594-3013.