



City of New London

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Testimony of Daryl Justin Finizio, Mayor, City of New London, on Governor's H.B. No. 6840 **AN ACT CONCERNING INVESTMENTS IN CONNECTICUT'S INFRASTRUCTURE** before the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee on April 27, 2015.

As Mayor of New London, Connecticut—a city which is the transportation hub of Southeastern Connecticut and which has enormous tourism potential—I fully support the Governor's proposed investments in infrastructure.

I am, of course, particularly supportive of improvements to the Gold Star Highway. This bridge is heavily used by commuters and tourists, and would be a main evacuation route in the event of a natural or manmade disaster. I am grateful to the Governor for having the foresight to invest in it before it becomes a hazard.

I also want to voice my support for the Governor's proposed \$101 million investment in urban bikeway, pedestrian connectivity, trails and alternative mobility programs. In the 21st century, as we move towards transit-oriented development and prioritize reducing greenhouse gas production, we need to make our cities more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

In New London, bicycle and pedestrian-centered infrastructure investment would better connect our colleges to our downtown, would complement our train station and the future National Coast Guard Museum, would improve public health, reduce traffic congestion, and improve life for the residents of New London.

The median income of New London residents is under \$23,000, and we have many residents for whom owning a car is either a financial impossibility or a financial hardship. By making it easier for people to survive without a car, or with fewer cars per household, this investment will make a real difference in their monthly budgets.

Lastly, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure will make Connecticut's cities economically competitive as we aim to attract more businesses, and attract and retain millennials. According to a 2014 survey of more than 700 people aged 18-34, 80% of young adults would prefer to live in an area where they don't need a car, and a majority would consider relocating to a city with better transportation.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of this investment in public transportation. This investment will pay dividends in economic growth, public safety and public health for decades to come.