



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN T. SHABAN
ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIFTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4200
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700
John.Shaban@housegop.ct.gov

RANKING MEMBER
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MEMBER
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Testimony in support of

H.B. 5385: An Act Concerning Traffic Flow On The Merritt Parkway

Transportation Committee

February 11, 2015

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, Senator Boucher, Representative O'Dea and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee:

Thank you for raising H.B. 5385 -- An Act Concerning Traffic Flow On The Merritt Parkway. The bill seeks to address the undeniable traffic issues on the Merritt Parkway via (a) the installation and operation of control signals to time traffic entry at entrance ramps on the Merritt Parkway, coupled with (b) the imposition of reduced speed limits as appropriate. These measures would presumably be in use during high traffic time periods.

The practice of timing of entry to highways at entrance ramps is commonly known as "ramp metering." Ramp meters are stop-and-go traffic signals that regulate the entry of traffic on a roadway. The main goal of ramp metering is to control traffic flow, improve safety and reduce travel times for commuters.

Ramp metering was first implemented in 1963 on the Eisenhower Expressway (I-290) in Chicago, and has been systematically deployed in many urban with dense population and chronic traffic problems.¹ Ramp meters are now commonplace in the New York City metropolitan area,

¹ E.g., Los Angeles; San Diego; Sacramento; the San Francisco Bay Area; Fresno; Seattle; Denver; Phoenix; Las Vegas; Salt Lake City; Portland; Minneapolis-St. Paul; Milwaukee; Columbus; Cincinnati; Houston; Atlanta; Miami; Washington, DC (only along Interstate 395 and Interstate 66 in Arlington County, Virginia); Kansas City, Missouri; and along the Queen Elizabeth Way in Mississauga, Ontario (Toronto-bound ramps from Cawthra Road, Hurontario Street, Mississauga Road, Erin Mills Parkway, Winston Churchill Boulevard, Ford Drive) Canada (since the 1970s).

Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Seattle, Phoenix, Houston, Atlanta, Milwaukee, Columbus, Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan areas, and more than two dozen smaller metropolitan areas.²

Ramp metering has had some notable successes.

For instance, the Baton Rouge ramp meter system, which began operating in 2010, includes 16 ramp meters on I-12 from Essen to Walker, Louisiana. A study conducted by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development shows that travel times on I-12 have been reduced 15% overall and 19% during rush hour commutes. Travel speeds have actually increased by 4 mph overall and 7 mph during morning and evening commutes. Additionally, car accidents have been reduced by 8.3% overall, with a significant 34.3% reduction during the AM and PM rush hour commutes.³

Similarly, a study performed by the Washington State Department of Transportation concluded that ramp meters on I-405 reduce travel times by as much as 40 percent during morning rush hours.⁴

Likewise, the Minnesota legislature conducted a study in 2000 on the effectiveness of the metered ramps in operation in Minnesota. The study -- performed by Cambridge Systematics (used by CTDOT) -- concluded that when the ramp meters were not in use, travel times increased by 22%, freeway capacity decreased by 9%, highway speeds dropped by 7%, and accidents increased by 26 percent. While the use of ramp meters continues to be debated in Minnesota -- indeed, the study was prompted in part by long wait times -- the Minnesota DOT continues to refine its program.⁵

Finally, a recent article in North Carolina cites a study that estimated the cost of installing 14 metered ramps at \$3.2 million.⁶ Likewise, there are numerous other discussions about the benefits and burdens of metered ramps readily available for reference.⁷

In sum, I am hopeful that we can explore options for a similar ramp metering system in

² In New York the ramp meters are typically referred to as "merge lights" whereas in Houston they are known as "flow signals."

³ See _____.

⁴ See <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/D4A44406-D1D3-4AAD-BEFE-033D7E033359/0/I405study.pdf>.

⁵ See <http://nexus.unm.edu/papers/RampMetersOnTrial.pdf>; <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/rampmeter/pdf/executivesummary.pdf>.

⁶ <http://nccriminallaw.sog.unc.edu/ramp-meters-they-just-may-alter-your-life/>

⁷ http://www.virginiaidot.org/vtrc/main/online_reports/pdf/99-tar5.pdf;
http://wwwapps.dotd.la.gov/administration/public_info/projects/docs_test/60/documents/Ramp_Meter_Brochure_-_Overview_and_Instructions.pdf;
http://www.crtpo.org/PDFs/Agenda_Minutes/2014/Presentations/TCC_2014_02_February_Presentation_04.pdf

Connecticut to help ease traffic issues on the Merritt Parkway.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Shaban', written in a cursive style.

John Shaban
State Representative
135th District