

Testimony of Gary Fillion in Support of Proposed House Bill 5940  
Before the Transportation Committee February 23, 2015

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Thank you to the Honorable Co-Chairs, Senator Maynard and Representative Guerrero; Ranking Members Senator Boucher and Representative O'Dea; as well as the entire Transportation Committee for your consideration today of HB 5940, AN ACT CONCERNING SIGNS PROHIBITING "JAKE-BRAKING".

I am here supporting HB 5940 to allow the DOT the power to erect highway signs prohibiting the use of Jake Brake accessories on tractor-trailers when they descend steep grades through densely populated areas. It has been documented that the noise emitted from these devices can easily exceed 120 Dbs. When the DOT originally constructed the I-84 corridor through the Riverside community of Sandy Hook, for whatever reason, they elected NOT to erect sound barrier walls as they did for many other locales along the highway, even though in this locale, the highway can be as close as 50 feet to a master bedroom! See attached map.

We (Riverside) have battled with the DOT in the past to correct this omission as not only would the erection of a sound barrier be beneficial to the quietness of the neighborhood, but it would also act as a barrier to protect the dangerously close households from falling debris as well as a potentially errant 80,000 Lb. truck that would certainly wreak havoc in the neighborhood if one ever broached the guard rails. We've seen in the area this winter that this can easily be done with the hardened snow piles now lining the guardrails.

Additionally, specifically, at the bottom of the grade where new construction has just replaced both highway spans over Center Street, we have at least four school buses a day picking up and discharging middle and high school students. One law suit alone would more than justify the cost of erecting the sound barrier walls much less the signage for Jake Braking which, by default, would slow down the truckers and allow them to safely and quietly pass through the area.

Other states in our wonderful country have recognized the need for such speed control, especially in the state of Colorado where signage also includes checking your brakes and using lower gears to decrease your speed. This grade on I-84 is almost three miles long, beginning at Exit 11

and terminating with a sharp, left hand curve before crossing the Housatonic. During the two year reconstruction of the new bridges over Center Street which DID widen the highway by an additional lane and which should have qualified it for sound barrier additions but was conveniently sidestepped, the truck traffic was forced to navigate very narrow passages, which exacerbated the use of Jake Braking. Plus, in many cases, the trucks also ran over the rumble strips creating additional noise!

We (Riverside) are just asking at this time that some remedial action can be taken in the form of restricting Jake Braking; to allow us to enjoy our neighborhood; to be able to sit out on our deck at five o'clock on Sunday and not be blasted away by the incessant racket of truckers using Jake Brakes to allow them to speed on their way to their Monday morning destination.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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