



TOWN OF HARWINTON

HARWINTON, CONNECTICUT 06791

Tele: (860) 485-9051 • Fax: (860) 485-0051

My name is Michael Criss, First Selectman for the Town of Harwinton.

I am testifying on behalf of the Town of Harwinton, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to all towns and cities, in particular when they affect the Northwest Corner:

SB-504, "A Act concerning a Study of Commuter Rail Service to Torrington"

The Town of Harwinton Supports this bill as it would benefit the entire NW corner allowing residents from this area to get jobs further away from home or in the city with safe passage and less congestion on the roadways. With limited jobs here it would open up so many more opportunities and connect the Northwest corner with the rest of the State. Further, if a study was conducted it would prove to be beneficial for the economy in the Northwest corner as well, by bringing families from other areas of the State to visit the unique opportunities the NW Corner has to offer. This will also hopefully show a larger effect in the City of Torrington by allowing industry back and re-purposing old vacated manufacturing buildings if a freight line was established as well.

While the long-range hope is to see commuter traffic, freight traffic once again moving into the city rests on economic recovery, tourism and downtown revival. The Tracks between Thomaston and Torrington are owned by the State Department of Transportation and are in serious need of rehabilitation work. A five-mile stretch, which begins just north of the Thomaston Dam, needs ties replaced and there has been no capital investment in the rail lines since 1999. One freight car has the capacity of four freight trucks and shipping by rail remains a cost-efficient way to transport goods and commodities.

I sincerely hope that the push to invest in transportation is the administration's priority this year and that this study is given its proper attention and serious consideration. I want to thank you for your time. Feel free to contact me with any questions or need for supporting data.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Criss, First Selectman, Town of Harwinton 860-485-9051.