

**Statement of Michael J. Riley  
President  
Motor Transport Association of Connecticut  
Before  
The Joint Committee on Transportation  
February, 23, 2015**

**Re: House Bill No. 6817 AN ACT CONCERNING THE  
QUICK CLEARANCE OF STATE HIGHWAYS.**

I am Michael J. Riley, President of Motor Transport Association of Connecticut (MTAC), a statewide trade association, which represents around 800 companies that operate commercial motor vehicles in and through the state of Connecticut. Our membership includes freight haulers, movers of household goods, construction companies, distributors, tank truck operators and hundreds of companies that use trucks in their business and firms that provide goods and services to truck owners.

**MTAC OPPOSES THIS BILL**

This bill provides extraordinary indemnification of tow truck operators, or any enforcement officer, or traffic authority for damage done to a vehicle or its contents, or the surrounding area, caused by the emergency removal of a vehicle, if the removal measures are taken under the direction of an officer or authority and all reasonable care is taken by the operator of a wrecker.

The expeditious removal of disabled vehicles is important. Traffic incidents affect many more vehicles than those directly involved. They cause serious delays of passenger and commercial truck traffic. The trucking industry wants disabled vehicles removed as soon as it can be done safely.

However, one truck could have millions of dollars worth of computers, fragile equipment, hazardous materials, live animals or frozen or perishable food products. Modern trucks and trailers can combine to make a rig cost over \$200,000. Often they are operated by a small businessman working hard and doing important work.



It takes great skill to determine how to remove these vehicles from the highway. Our Connecticut towing professionals are experts at assessing a situation and quickly devising a strategy to return the roadway to full operations. They know what to do and they do it well. And, one of the reasons that they do it well is that they know that they could be held liable for mistakes that can be made that could result in significant damage to vehicles or loss of cargo.

Many tow truck companies in this state belong to Motor Transport Association because they not only provide service to the trucking industry, they are truck operators too. My members have relationships with towers in their area and we really don't get many complaints.

We feel that holding everyone at a traffic incident harmless except the owners of the vehicles is not good public policy. People should be held responsible for what they do and providing blanket immunity could protect bad actors. We don't want to remove incentives to be safe, responsible and accountable.

Additionally, we understand that Great Western Casualty Company and the Owner-Operators Independent Drivers Association have both submitted testimony in opposition to the bill.

Thank you.

