

Testifier Name: Christian Allyn

Related Bills: \*Proposed S.B. No. 495 AN ACT FUNDING AN INDEPENDENT STUDY TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF RESTORING PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE FROM DANBURY TO THE MASSACHUSETTS BORDER; \*Proposed H.B. No. 6323 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CONNECTICUT TRANSPORTATION BANK; \*Proposed H.B. No. 6343 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RESTORATION OF THE HOUSATONIC RAILROAD LINE.

Hello, my name is Christian Allyn. I would like to thank the chairs, Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero and all the members of the committee to allow me to testify before you. I am a student at the University of Connecticut and the Transit Campaign Coordinator of UConnPIRG, a non-partisan student advocacy organization.

I grew up and continue to reside in North Canaan, an area characterized for its iconic natural features and rural townships. At present there is no way to leave my hometown and connect to metropolitan areas other than by car or a lengthy bus line. At present it takes me, if I am lucky, one hour to travel to Danbury, and the same amount of time to Hartford. It is of concern to me that I may not be able to live in this area which has been the home of my family going back eight generations while holding a position in another Connecticut municipality. There is currently a proposal to upgrade the Housatonic Rail Line to allow passenger service. Research by ConnPIRG and many others show that for the first time in over 70 years, people are driving less, making transit options other than cars all the more necessary to meet the needs of future businesses and workers. When spending on roads, I urge this committee to apply the principle of "fix it first" because it does not make sense for our future or for taxpayers to expand road infrastructure while our current road infrastructure is broken or unsafely maintained.

It would be a very wise decision for taxpayers and for the State of Connecticut to expand public transportation systems in all parts of the state, rural and urban, in order to account with current driving trends, and supply for future demand.