

Dear Representative Guerrero, Senator Maynard, Senator Boucher, Representative O'Dea and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 6343: An act concerning the restoration of the Housatonic Railroad line.

I am writing to you, as a resident of New York City and New Marlborough, MA, in support of updating and restoring passenger rail service through Northwest Connecticut, as described in Rep. Roberta Willis's proposed legislation HB 6343. This legislation is critical to the future of NWCT. Here are some of the benefits offered to the citizens of Connecticut:

1. Support existing businesses and increase tourism.
2. Attract young families and entrepreneurs.
3. Improve rail safety and decrease noise and vibration
4. Stimulate new local transport options and enterprises

I can tell you that my partner and I would use the rail every weekend, rather than make the drive, and that many of our guests will, too. As it stands now, we frequently make the drive to Wassaucott to pick up guests – wasting a great deal of gas and often dining out in NY State. As our careers change and we will spend more time in the Berkshires, frequent weekday trips to/from NYC will also start to occur. I think our story is similar to many in the Berkshires and Northwestern CT. The younger “millennial” generation is avoiding cars and seeks destinations that can be reached by good public transit – as they grow older our region has the potential to attract great talents who desire an alternative location to NYC that is still well connected to the city. The history of NWCT and the Berkshires has proven time and time again that good ties to NYC are vital for a prosperous economy for the region. I firmly believe re-establishing this rail link is a win-win for both Connecticut and Berkshire County. I urge you to move forward with this.

Yours sincerely,
Frank Potash
220 West 107th Street, Apt 4-E
New York, NY 10025