

WSLR Business Association - A Committee of the Waterbury Regional Chamber

Jay Sargent; Chairman WSLR Assc.
TC's Pawn Company
503 Lakewood Road, Waterbury, CT 06704

2-11-15

Re: IN FAVOR - Proposed S.B. No. 478 introduced by Sen. Joan V. Hartley, 15th Dist.

Good afternoon distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. For the record my name is Jay Sargent and I am here today not only as a business owner on the proposed bus route but also as the Chairman of the Wolcott Street Lakewood Road Business Association (a Committee of the Waterbury Regional Chamber) representing over 50 businesses on the stretch of the proposed bus route.

There are many reasons this area is in need of the proposed route. Let me begin with the obvious; Economic growth. This area of Waterbury was once known as the center or "hub" of the retail industry in the Naugatuck Valley Region. We had one of the first malls in the region and patrons came from all throughout the valley. In the late 90's this mall was closed down to allow for a new mall in the downtown area Brass Mill Center. Through the years the Wolcott Street Lakewood Road area has "re-built" itself with big box anchor stores and many small privately owned businesses.

This proposed bus route will enable the citizens of Waterbury who utilize public transportation, many of which are lower income families to enrich their lives with access to the many affordable restaurants, recreational, retail and needed services which the businesses on Lakewood Road provide.

When I was a young teenager growing up in Waterbury, my first Job was on Lakewood Road. I can recall walking over the mile long hill through snow and in 100 degree heat to get to work. The buses would only run to either side of the mile long hill. Now 30 years later, I find myself still working on Lakewood Road, as a business owner who has employees of his own that have to walk over that same hill to get to their jobs, but now I have learned I have a voice that can bring change. This route will enable access for all to more employment opportunities in the area.

Furthermore, as a safety concern; Wolcott St. and Lakewood Road both consist of 4 lane roads. To walk from the area where the buses currently stop to Lakewood Road is quite dangerous. Over the years I have seen many accidents where as people were hit trying to cross the busy intersections to get to their destinations.

This bus route is a positive step forward to improving and enriching the lives and safety of the citizens of Waterbury while simultaneously improving business growth in the Wolcott St. , Lakewood Road area.

Thank you for your time today and a special thank you to Senator Hartley for her dedication and continued acknowledgement for the needs of all the people she represents whether they "ride the bus" or not.