

February 10, 2015

The Honorable Andrew Maynard  
The Honorable Antonio Guerrero  
Co-Chairpersons, Transportation Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591



**Re: SUPPORT for SB 502, *An Act Concerning Bicycle Safety and Transportation Options***

Dear Chairmen Maynard and Guerrero:

As a statewide membership organization that works to make Connecticut a better place to bike and walk, Bike Walk Connecticut SUPPORTS SB 502, *An Act Concerning Bicycle Safety and Transportation Options*.

Connecticut is not yet a great place to bike and walk, but it could be, with strong leadership from legislators, the Governor, and municipal leaders. We urge you to draft SB 502 as a comprehensive bill that, at a minimum:

1. Clarifies the law on riding as far to the right as practicable as recommended by the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). Our proposal to amend Conn. Gen. Stat. §14-286b(a), developed in collaboration with the legal staff of the LAB, is attached.
2. Permits and encourages modern bicycle facilities, including two-way bike lanes and cycle tracks.
3. Clarifies when and how motor vehicles may pass slower moving vehicles, including bicycles.

Last year, Connecticut's "Bike Friendly State" ranking dropped from 18 to 21.<sup>1</sup> This is a case of "if you're not moving forward, you're moving backward." While other states are taking major steps to promote active transportation, merely maintaining the status quo put Connecticut behind. The LAB's state rankings were released on the same day that last year's Vulnerable User bill was signed into law, a measure that took five years to pass. Connecticut simply is not moving forward at the same pace as other states.

**Why does being bike-friendly matter?** "Active transportation" and being bike-friendly matter for important transportation, environmental, health and economic competitiveness policy reasons.

- Cycling can help mitigate commuting traffic and the exorbitant costs of road building and maintenance.
- Shifting the mode of transportation from driving to biking and walking for short trips would reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Taking short trips by bike or on foot, instead of by car, is a great way to get more exercise and tackle our obesity epidemic.
- Cycling ties into economic competitiveness: millennials don't love to drive; knowledge workers choose where they want to live; great cycling would strengthen Connecticut's tourism economy.

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<sup>1</sup> LAB 2014 Bike Friendly State Report Card, at [http://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/BFS2014\\_Connecticut.pdf](http://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/BFS2014_Connecticut.pdf)

**Cycling can help manage commuting traffic and avoid costs of road building and maintenance.** The 2014 MetroHartford Progress Points report<sup>2</sup> found that 81% of all workers in Greater Hartford commute alone by car, and that 83% of the 121,000 jobs in Hartford are filled by commuters. Surely this is a factor in highway congestion. Making it easier to commute by bike, in combination with transit, will mitigate traffic congestion and help avoid the exorbitant costs of road expansion and maintenance.

**Shifting the mode of transportation from driving to biking and walking for short trips would reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.** Promoting active transportation for trips of three to five miles or less should be part of Connecticut's climate action plan.

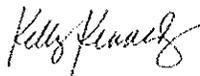
**Being inhospitable to biking and walking contributes to our obesity epidemic.** Connecticut's adult obesity rate is 25.0%, up from 10.4% in 1990. The obesity rate for children age 10-17 is 15%, up from 12.3% in 2004.<sup>3</sup> Obesity related health problems like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, and obesity-related cancer can be disastrous on a personal level. They are also enormous drains on our personal and public finances. Many people want to bike and walk more but they don't feel safe doing so on our streets and roads. Parents are reluctant to let their kids walk or bike to school because of safety concerns with vehicle traffic. Embracing biking and walking as a matter of transportation policy would help check these trends.

**Cycling ties into economic competitiveness in other ways: Millennials don't love to drive; knowledge workers choose where they want to live; great cycling would boost Connecticut's tourism economy.**

- It is now well-known that **millennials** choose to drive far less than preceding generations. Many **knowledge workers** won't consider living anywhere but in a walkable, bikeable community. A place where 81% of a region commutes to work alone by car on congested highways does not depict a lifestyle that is attractive to the millennials and knowledge workers we want to attract and keep in our labor force.
- Biking—and walking—makes for **vibrant town centers and cities**. By putting "feet (and wheels) on the street," biking and walking creates lively cities, towns, commercial districts and neighborhoods.
- Our historic sites, working farms, rolling hills, stone walls, and views of the Sound beg to be explored by bike. Connected, completed multiuse paths, along with modern complete streets designs, would boost **Connecticut's tourism economy** significantly.

We hope 2015 will be the year that Connecticut moves to the forefront on becoming a great place to bike and walk. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



Kelly Kennedy, Esq., Executive Director  
Bike Walk Connecticut

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.metrohartfordprogresspoints.org/>

<sup>3</sup> The State of Obesity, a project of the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, at <http://stateofobesity.org/states/ct/>.