

**Testimony by Elm City Cycling, Inc. In Support of
Proposed Bill No. 6368: An Act Allowing Towns to Establish Two-Way Protected Bicycle
Lanes, and Proposed Bill No. 502: An Act Concerning Bicycle Safety and Transportation
Options**

Committee on Transportation
February 10, 2015
Submitted by William Kurtz, Director, Elm City Cycling

Senator Bye, Representative, and Representative McCarthy Vahey, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Transportation:

On behalf of Elm City Cycling, Inc., a bicycle-advocacy organization based in New Haven, Connecticut, I would like to express support for Proposed Bills No. 6368 and Proposed Bill No. 502, concerning, respectively, the establishment of two-way protected bicycle lanes and bicycle safety and transportation options.

Although current state law allows for the use by bicyclists of ordinary travel lanes on local streets and state roads, the fact remains that riding a bicycle on many of those roads is a challenging proposition for many people. It's long been clear that one of the best means to increase people's comfort with bicycling is the creation of protected lanes ("cycle tracks") segregated from motor vehicle traffic. In New Haven, for example, Elm Street and Church Street are one way and three or four lanes wide--practically mini-highways that are daunting for even experienced riders to navigate by bicycle.

Some obstacles to the creation of cycle tracks exist. Current state law supersedes engineering best practices and it needs to be loosened so that our cities and towns can use the cutting edge thinking and contemporary ideas in transportation research and innovation, as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). These agencies acknowledges the utility of things like cycle tracks, providing guidelines in some cases and referencing outside guidelines in others but they are all limited by what our state laws allow at present.

I would also like to express our approval of the language proposed by BikeWalkCT for Proposed Bill 502, to clarify the ambiguity in Sec. 14-286 regarding the obligation for people on bikes to ride "as far to the right as practicable." Currently the word "practicable" is difficult to define and there is still substantial confusion in a large part of the population about where a person on a bike is legally entitled to ride. (It's the rare cyclist who hasn't been told to "get off the road!" by a motorist). BikeWalkCT's proposed amendments make it clear that the judgment of the rider is the most important factor in determining how far to the right is safe and practical to ride. Their amended version should become law.

For the reasons above, we support Proposed Bills 6368 and 502.

Respectfully submitted,

William Kurtz
Director, Elm City Cycling
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