



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the  
Commissioner

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**Public Hearing – March 11, 2016**  
**Insurance Committee**

**Testimony Submitted by Commissioner James Redeker**  
**Department of Transportation**

**SB 385 – AAC Notice of Pesticide Applications Made to Any Railroad Rights-Of-Way**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding **Senate Bill No. 385– AAC Notice of Pesticide Applications Made to Any Railroad Rights-of Way**. The Department of Transportation (CTDOT) provides the following testimony.

The application of herbicides is done routinely each year to prevent overgrowth of vegetation along the railroad right of way. The timing of these applications includes a pre-emergent herbicide in the spring to prevent weed seeds from germinating and a summer application to manage existing vegetation. The precise timing of these applications can vary depending on workforce and contractor availability, track access and weather conditions. The Environmental Protection Agency currently regulates the chemicals and methods used in vegetation control. CTDOT is not aware of pesticide applications currently conducted by the railroad companies.

The Federal Rail Administration requires all railroads operating in the United States to control vegetation along their right of way to ensure the safety of railroad employees and the public. Vegetation management along rail rights of way is an important aspect of railroad safety. Vegetation causes deterioration of track components, can cause increased stopping distances, and represents fire and tripping hazards. Visual inspection of railroad tracks is necessary to identify and repair or replace damaged and defective track components.

The legislation as proposed would be a cumbersome and unnecessary administrative burden. CTDOT would propose an annual programmatic approach working with DEEP, rather than a community by community notification for each instance the herbicide is applied.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato ([pamela.sucato@ct.gov](mailto:pamela.sucato@ct.gov)) or CJ Strand ([carl.strand@ct.gov](mailto:carl.strand@ct.gov)) at the Department of Transportation, (860) 594-3013.