



LOCAL 478 • CONNECTICUT

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF OPERATING ENGINEERS

1965 Dixwell Avenue • Hamden, Connecticut 06514

House Joint Resolution No. 1 RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO PROTECT THE RESOURCES OF THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND.

Good morning Representative Guerrero, Senator Leone and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Nate Brown and I'm the Referral Manager and Government Relations Director with the Operating Engineers Local 478 - representing 3000 Equipment Operators in Connecticut.

On behalf of the Operating Engineers I am submitting this written testimony in support of HJR 1 which will establish a Constitutional Amendment to protect the resources of the Special Transportation Fund. Having a Constitutional Amendment implementing a "lock-box" on monies in the Special Transportation Fund will ensure that revenue collected for the purpose of maintaining and improving our transportation infrastructure is fully dedicated to transportation purposes only. Funds collected through the motor vehicle fuels tax and the gross earnings tax cannot be allowed to be transferred into the General Fund, or be "raided" by other interests or to help balance the budget, as has occurred frequently in the past. Such a constitutional amendment will offer a level of protection against the potential of future "raiding" of transportation funds for other uses. I realize that several members feel that it still won't be a perfect solution, however, it is a solid foundation to build upon. Unfortunately, over the past couple of decades Connecticut has let it's infrastructure deteriorate to some of the worst in the nation. Whether it's potholes, congestion, deficient bridges or just inadequately maintained roads it's time to make a commitment that the funding that has been in place to fix these problems actually goes where it was intended.

Over the next thirty years Connecticut is facing extreme circumstances in rebuilding and maintaining our transportation infrastructure. We have been hearing from Governor Malloy and Transportation Advocates that over \$100 Billion in capital improvements are needed over the next 30 years to provide Connecticut residents with a "best-in-class" transportation infrastructure to alleviate congestion and modernize our roads and bridges. Our state cannot begin to achieve this goal while continuing the past practice of having moneys from the Special Transportation Fund being regularly diverted into the General Fund for other purposes. The State must first establish a "lock-box" to protect revenue in the Special Transportation Fund, and then secondly find amenable solutions for increasing revenue to better maintain and improve our aging transportation infrastructure.

Connecticut's future transportation infrastructure needs cannot be met while continuing the past practice of regularly transferring moneys from the Special Transportation Fund to the General Fund to use on non-transportation items. The residents of Connecticut deserve a first in class transportation system and the only way to achieve that will be to make sure that the funding for transportation stays in transportation.