



Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
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Before the Transportation Committee
Hartford, CT
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**Testifying in support of Governor's HJR 1
A RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO PROTECT THE RESOURCES OF THE
SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND**

Good afternoon Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera, Senator Boucher, Representative O'Dea and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

CBIA supports the Governor's HJR 1.

In a recent survey, Connecticut businesses overwhelmingly (74%) support legislation that would prohibit the use of special transportation funds to cover general fund shortfalls. While fiscal self-restraint should be the easiest solution, a constitutional amendment to protect the special transportation fund may be what is necessary to protect the fund.

While this measure did pass with considerable support in the December special session, it is critically important that it receives even more bipartisan support this session. Simply put, waiting until the 2018 elections may be too late.

Some believe that implementing this constitutional lockbox is the first step towards tolls in their communities. Regardless of your position on tolls or other new source of revenue, it appears likely they are on their way – with or without a transportation lockbox. The fight over tolls is still one to be had – but at the minimum, everyone should agree that if they are imposed, it is better to have protection in place before they are imposed.

Others argue that the constitutional lockbox, as drafted, is not enough protection of the funds. To this, I would argue that the legalese is not the true deterrent here. It is critical that voters have the opportunity to overwhelmingly support fiscal restraint that is embodied by the lockbox proposed in this resolution. Fourteen votes – consisting of both Democrats and Republicans, are all that stood in the way from giving voters this opportunity in the coming election.

We strongly urge you to support this resolution.