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WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HJ 54 RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL TO CONSTRUCT AN ALTERNATIVE AMTRAK ROUTE THROUGH SOUTHEAST CONNECTICUT; SB 253 AN ACT REQUIRING MUNICIPAL APPROVAL OF CHANGES TO RAIL SERVICE; AND SB 263 AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL APPROVAL OF CHANGES TO RAIL SERVICE

Senator Leone, Representative Guerrera, and the distinguished members of the Transportation Committee:

We are writing to express our support for HJ 54, SB 253 and SB 263. Together, these are very important measures needed to protect the preservation of our state's natural resources and historic resources. The resolution and bills have been introduced at the request of State Senator Paul Formica and State Representative Devon Carney after months of investigation and their careful consideration.

We hope the full Connecticut General Assembly will take a strong position in opposition to the proposal by the Federal Railroad Administration regarding construction of a bypass on the Northeast Corridor rail line between Old Saybrook, Connecticut to Kenyon, Rhode Island through the scenic and historic towns of southeast Connecticut. Adoption by the full legislative body of HJ 54 will send a needed message to federal transportation officials that the proposal has the opposition of not just our shoreline communities, but of the whole state.

The companion bills, SB 253 and SB 263, will require municipal approval through referendum of such projects and assure that no state funds will be available when municipal approval is not achieved. Regrettably, these measures are badly needed, given that federal transportation officials have made every effort to avoid public disclosure and input into the process.

Finally, we can speak personally to what will be lost should be proposed rail line be allowed to displace homes tracking north of I-95. Among these homes is our historic Cape Cod home located at 5 Short Hills Road in Old Lyme, CT. According to the author of "The Cape Cod House," (Stanley Schuler, 1982), our Short Hills home is perhaps one of the oldest Cape Cod homes in America. Located at the end of an abandoned stage-coach road from the early days of the Connecticut colony, Schuler dates the original construction of our home at 1666. As we understand the FRA proposal, our historic home will be bulldozed to make way for the high speed rail.

For all of the above mentioned reasons, we hope the Transportation Committee will adopt these measures.