

My name is Peter Cable, and I am submitting this testimony in support of bills H.J. No. 54, S.B. No. 253 and S.B. No. 263.

I am a 50 year inhabitant of New London county, CT, with 45 years of residence in Old Lyme, and I am writing to articulate the inappropriateness of the Tier1Final EIS preferred alternative - incorporating a new rail line between Old Saybrook , CT and Kenyon, RI - for the residents of the region. The new rail line offers no improvement in service to the area affected (New London county, CT, and Washington county, RI) and threatens the inhabitants with several potential cultural, historical and environmental dangers. As an inhabitant of a predominantly rural area, I would very much like to see improved intercity and regional rail service, and believe the FRA has good alternative choices to the one being proposed as the preferred alternative in the Tier 1Final EIS.

Regarding the ineffectiveness of service provided by the preferred alternative new rail line, there is provision in the Tier 1 Final EIS for a single new station, situated in West Mystic, CT, presumably – as indicated by station name - serving New London and Mystic. Unaccountably the new station would not be close enough to either New London or Mystic to appropriately and conveniently service anticipated commuter traffic to Groton and New London (for, e.g., General Dynamics Corp Electric Boat Division employees) or tourist traffic to both Mystic (e.g., Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium destinations) and New London (for, e.g., the planned National Coast Guard Museum). The preferred alternative new rail line through Southeastern Connecticut and Western Rhode Island provides an estimated 30 minute travel-time saving for intercity travel, but unfortunately provides no further improved service within the region directly affected by the construction, operation and maintenance of the new segment.

More important than the lack of improved service for the affected region, the CT-RI new rail segment threatens serious harm to this area of half a million residents. The two communities most visibly adversely affected are Old Lyme and New London. In the Tier 1Draft EIS a new segment bridge across the Connecticut River was to have bisected Old Lyme's historic district, run directly through the campus of the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts and cut through the protected Lieutenant River marshland. In response to public outcry and to avoid this cultural and environmental travesty, the FRA changed the bridge to a tunnel under the Connecticut River from Old Saybrook to Old Lyme.

Though some analysis of this revised alternative should have been evident even at the Tier 1 level, direct cost estimates for the tunnel alternative were not spelled out in the Tier 1 Final EIS. Nevertheless rough magnitudes of cost used by the FRA can be gleaned from FEIS Volume 2 model estimates for tunnel boring, these estimates being about \$0.5B-1B per sq mi of tunnel length. For a presumed ruling grade of 2% for passenger rail in the proposed tunnel, the required length of the tunnel from Old Saybrook to Old Lyme would need to be at least 4-5 miles long, depending how deep below the river bed the tunnel was bored, and would result in a FRA Connecticut

River tunnel cost estimate of \$2.5B-5B. By way of comparison with the real world, the Highway 99 tunnel in Seattle, WA, currently being bored in sediment similar to the proposed tunnel under the Connecticut River, is 1.7 mi long and is anticipated to cost \$3.4B when completed. That would suggest that, since boring is the driving cost of tunnel construction, a completed NEC tunnel under the Connecticut River actually would cost \$8B-\$10B (in current dollars) rather than the \$2.5B-5B suggested in the Tier 1 Final EIS. It seems very unlikely that a project costing on the order of \$10B to connect Old Saybrook to Old Lyme could be approved. That conclusion indicates that the NEC preferred alternative tunnel under the Connecticut River is not a serious option and raises the possibility of reappearance of the unacceptable Connecticut River bridge crossing in the FRA Tier 2 phase of planning.

New London also is directly affected adversely by the proposed new rail segment. The city of New London is only 10 sq mi in area, and this area is divided by the passage of I-95, which separates a college district, containing the US Coast Guard Academy and Connecticut College, from the downtown district, containing restaurants, businesses, and music and art enterprises, including the Garde Art Center. A new rail line running parallel to I-95 can only serve to exacerbate the disconnect between college and downtown districts in New London, without providing the opportunity for improved commuter or tourist service.

Most of the shoreline towns in New London County and Washington County are rural in character and largely depend on private groundwater wells for water. The proposed new rail segment would run through Aquifer Protection Areas in East Lyme and Stonington, as designated by the State of Connecticut, and would transit the Pawcatuck Basin Aquifer System, a sole source aquifer as designated by the US EPA, supplying water to Southeastern Connecticut and Southern Rhode Island. In addition an examination of a surficial aquifer potential map prepared by the State of Connecticut indicates that there are at least 6 aquifers essential for residents with dug water wells that would be transited by a new NEC rail segment. The emission of organic and inorganic substances from the construction and operation phases of the proposed new rail segment poses a potential hazard to all the groundwater systems identified in the new segment region of influence. With so many of the half million residents of New London and Washington Counties potentially affected by the probable dangers of the new rail line, it is unfortunate that no accounting is forthcoming at this stage and any proposed mitigation must await a Tier 2 EIS.

The residents of the region affected by the preferred alternative new rail segment through Southeastern CT and Southern RI care about preservation of land in an undeveloped and environmentally responsible way. To that end, the citizens of the area have acquired properties to insure that these lands are immune to development and environmental degradation. In Southeastern CT alone the new rail segment would transgress 5 properties that are municipally owned open space parcels and 4 that are community land trust properties. This violation of open space protected by the residents of these communities seems to take no account of the expressed wishes of the area inhabitants. In addition to putting aside the

demonstrated protection of land by residents, the Final EIS offers no assurance that the protected land can indeed be protected.

The long list of concerns outlined above does not mean I believe that nothing should be done to improve rail service from New Haven north by enhancements to intercity performance and improvements in regional service and resilience of the NEC system from New Haven. First, I believe that planned upgrades to the shoreline route in Southeastern Connecticut, including bridge improvements and planned bridge replacement over the Connecticut River, should be performed as soon as feasible. Also, the most vulnerable spots along the region's existing rail line are in Niantic and Stonington, and it would seem that funds spent on building a new rail segment could be better allocated to upgrading the existing line at those locations and strengthening it against sea level rise and consequent effects of severe storms. Such measures should increase the accessibility of the line (that is, level of service) and its resiliency against impending effects of climate change. Also, planned service from Hartford to Springfield in the Tier 1 Final EIS preferred should provide additional needed service to cities now underserved in the Northeast Corridor.