

To the Members of the Transportation Committee:

As a life-long resident of Old Lyme, with paternal ancestors in town dating back to 1862, I support the following bills: HJ 54, SB 253, and SB 263. I was part of the packed house that met with FRA representatives and Senator Blumenthal, among others, in the Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School auditorium in August 2016, I attended the open house in Springfield on Wednesday, January 25, 2017 where, after reading briefly all the informational placards displayed there, my question was, "Why do none of these talk about cost in dollars and schools, businesses, churches, homes, and natural resources affected?" The reply: "We won't know THAT until the boots-on-the-ground phase."

I cannot ignore that you are proposing impacting much of my HOME! The importance of our heritage is impressed upon Old Lyme children starting at a very young age. We're taken to the Florence Griswold Museum with the local school and are aware of the artistic riches contained also in the Lyme Art Association. We take walking tours of the Duck River Cemetery, where Civil War soldiers rest. Many students' families attend the First Congregational Church. As I grew up (Old Lyme High School, Class of 1970), I was happy that the Historic District Commission and then the Old Lyme Historical Society, Inc. were formed to safeguard this heritage. I have been the compiler and editor of Old Lyme's annual report since 1992, which has made me even more aware of the goals of the various commissions, such as the CT River Gateway Commission, that work to keep our resources and our town safe for future generations.

At the August meeting, we were promised that the Lyme Street portion would be a tunnel. While this out-of-sight option is of course very appealing, more study needs to be done of the impact on the Connecticut River. What harm may come to old structures ABOVE tunneling work BELOW? (When the Rogers Lake Dam was improved a year-and-a-half ago, local foundations were cracked; what will excavations for an underground rail tunnel cause?) I also understand that our all-volunteer fire department and EMS would need special training to handle emergencies in a tunnel.

Old Lyme residents are horrified to think that a high-speed train could destroy all that our town has always worked so hard to preserve. While it is comforting to hear local representatives assure us that this won't happen, a federal entity is a scary opponent, and we live too near New London, CT, site of the infamous "Little Pink House" taken by eminent domain for naught and the helplessness of residents against such an opponent. It is heartening that State Representative Devin Carney and State Senator Paul Formica have drafted three bills related to the FRA proposed bypass: HJ 54, SB 253, and SB 263.

Residents will oppose this and should be allowed to do so through referendum. Our support should be required for use of funds on such projects.

Thank you for your consideration.

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