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**Connecticut Council of Small Towns**  
**Before the Transportation Committee**  
**February 6, 2017**

- **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**
- **SB-263 - AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL APPROVAL OF CHANGES TO RAIL SERVICE**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), an association of approximately 110 small towns and cities throughout Connecticut, supports **HJ-54, SB-253, and SB-263**, which will help address concerns regarding the Federal Railroad Administration's proposal to construct an alternative rail route through Southeastern Connecticut.

Despite strong opposition from communities in Southeastern Connecticut, the Federal Rail Administration continues to move forward with a proposal to extend an alternative Amtrak route through Old Lyme's downtown.

Many smaller communities in Connecticut have downtowns that are a vital part of their history, economy, character and charm. These areas should be preserved in ways that will strengthen our communities and local economies and not be allowed to be torn apart by rail lines.

COST is very concerned that federal authorities failed to work with local communities in developing the draft plan and have failed to adequately respond to the concerns of state and local leaders and residents. This top-down approach has resulted in a seriously flawed plan which fails to coordinate and balance transit planning with other important state and local goals – conservation, historic preservation, environmental protection, and community development.

Given the challenges facing all levels of government, limited state and federal resources should be targeted to enhancing the existing rail lines in the Southeastern region rather than pouring

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money into new rail lines that will tear apart our smaller communities and disrupt local economies.

COST urges lawmakers to support legislation to ensure that municipal leaders and residents have a voice in issues affecting the future of their communities.

Please support HB-54, SB-253 and SB-263 which will help ensure a more collaborative process that engages municipal officials, residents, and businesses in crafting recommendations for enhancing rail lines without undermining Connecticut's small towns.