



MetroHartford Alliance Statement on Proposed Bill No. 501

**Connecticut General Assembly
Transportation Committee
March 1, 2017**

The MetroHartford Alliance serves as the region's economic development leader and the City of Hartford's Chamber of Commerce. Our investors include businesses of all sizes, health care providers, arts and higher education institutions as well as the municipalities of North Central Connecticut. Our mission is to ensure that the region competes aggressively and successfully for jobs, capital, and talent so that it thrives as one of the country's premier places for all people to live, play, work, start and grow a business, and raise a family.

The Alliance urges the members of the Transportation Committee to **support**:

Proposed Bill No. 501 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONSTRUCTION OF TUNNELS FOR INTERSTATE ROUTES 84 AND 91 IN THE HARTFORD REGION.

We applaud the Connecticut Department of Transportation's (ConnDOT) efforts to develop a replacement for the I-84 viaduct. ConnDOT's engagement of the public and numerous presentations to our investors and others allowed employers and residents to offer suggestions and to express concerns. Due to this engagement, ConnDOT has crafted an approach to the viaduct's replacement that is designed to safely accommodate increased traffic and provide additional opportunity for economic development. The Alliance is also highly supportive of the I-84/I-91 tunnel proposal as developed by Congressman John Larson (the "Proposal") and the aims of Proposed Bill No. 501.

The Proposal sets forth a tunnel alternative that would reroute I-84 underground from the area of Flatbush Avenue in West Hartford to the Charter Oak Bridge and then underneath the Connecticut River to the vicinity of Roberts Street in East Hartford. The Proposal would also bury I-91 along the Connecticut River north of Riverside Park in Hartford to the South Meadows. The combination would produce additional acres for development and recreation in both Hartford and East Hartford, the reduction of congestion via the rerouting of through traffic and the repurposing of sections of I-84 and I-91 into the types of boulevards that are at the heart of vibrant urban centers. It would have the important added benefit of establishing new levees on the land-side of the flood control system of the Connecticut River and thereby fortify the levees on the Hartford side of the River without the additional expense if such fortification was a separate project.

Regardless of the selected approach, a number of the Region's major employers have expressed concern about the impact of the viaduct's replacement on their decisions to retain and increase their levels of employment and investment in the City and the Region. The Alliance has encouraged ConnDOT to study the Proposal as an option to address the aging I-84 viaduct and is pleased that the Department has indicated a willingness to do so. The prospect of keeping I-84 open during construction phase and thereby reducing the impact on employment, deliveries, public safety vehicles and through traffic is central to The Alliance's enthusiastic support of the Proposal.

We believe that addressing the challenges of the viaduct and of the I-84/I-91 congestion represent a historic opportunity for the city of Hartford and the Region and urge the members of the Transportation Committee to support Proposed Bill No. 501.

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