March 4, 2019
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE 10:30 AM
PUBLIC HEARING

CHAIRPERSON: Representative Roland J. Lemar

SENATORS: Leone, Martin, Haskell, Needeman, Hwang

REPRESENTATIVES: Altobello, Concepcion, Garibay, Hall, Lopes, McCarthy-Vahey, Morin, Simms, Steinberg, Ziogas, Carney, Haines, Lavielle, McGorty, Zawistowski, Devlin, Reyes

REP. LEMAR (96TH): We’re going to reconvene this morning's public hearing. As I indicated, at 10:30 a.m., due to the impending, I'm sorry, due to the nature of the storm this morning, the Legislative Office building did not open until 10:30 a.m., which means it was difficult to accommodate our traditional sign-up and lottery process. So what we will do as people are arriving, they will sign up in the conference room and we'll take them on a rolling basis. There is a sign-up sheet that has been established. Please see the clerk to get your name on that sign-up sheet. We will hear from public officials until 11:45 a.m. At that point, we will intersperse public and signed-up officials at that moment until we exhaust the list. We will keep the public hearing testimony for written testimony open until March 25th, which is our JF deadline. So you can submit testimony if you're unable to join us today by emailing tratestimony@cga.ct.gov.
With that being said, Mr. Betts, you are first on the list.

REP. BETTS (78TH): Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to thank you, and the people who had planned to sign up, they have said that they'd like me to take up their time, so I am most grateful for that and I will certainly take advantage of that. But all kidding aside, good morning to you, Senator Leone, Ranking Members Devlin and Martin, and members of the Transportation Committee.

I'm here to testify on behalf of the House Republican caucus and would like to speak in support of Senate Bill 407, AN ACT CONCERNING THE NEW BRITAIN-HARTFORD BUSWAY. This bill would ensure that the legislature receives definitive and regular information concerning the ridership, utilization, revenue, and costs of operations and maintenance of the New Britain-Hartford busway. It would also prohibit any expansion in the busway unless first approved by the General Assembly. This information is critical in evaluating whether the steep taxpayer cost to construct and maintenance the busway is resulting in enough benefit to justify those costs.

The House Republican caucus proposed a similar concept this session, House Bill 5941, AN ACT CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF THE NEW BRITAIN-HARTFORD BUSWAY. Our bill goes a step further by reducing the subsidy for the busway and reducing service during nonpeak hours. We respectfully request that any substitute language for Senate Bill 407 include language to save state funds by ensuring that the busway is operated in an efficient manner. Please allow a full General Assembly for the opportunity to debate this issue and to pass legislation to help us
evaluate the New Britain-Hartford busway service, prevent its expansion without legislative approval, and to assure that it's operating as efficiently as possible.

I would just like to add to that a couple of other items. Last year, the state had spent $26 million dollars to operate the Fastrak. Four million of that was paid by fares from the riders. The other $22 million dollars was subsidized and paid for by the federal government. That subsidy ended in 2018. It was a three-year subsidy, which now means that the $22 million dollars is now a hundred percent going to be absorbed by the state government. There will be no longer any federal reimbursement. If you figure out the amount of subsidy for each passenger, it was $6.41, so what that means is for every dollar spent by passengers, taxpayers will be spending $6.41.

I would also ask -- and I used to serve on this Committee, I do now know if you've received this, but since the completion of the Fastrak, we've asked annually, I know on both sides of the aisle, for the actual report on what it actually costs to build and construct a Fastrak, and to my knowledge, the Transportation Committee and General Assembly has not received that. I know it was supposed to be $560 million dollars. I've been in the business of doing several capital campaigns, and I know that I'm required to submit very specific detailed audited numbers to show where the money was spent on the money that was raised, and I think that’s only prudent that we do the same thing here, albeit, you know, so many years after it's been built. And upon getting that information, I would hope, and I don't know if this is normal process, if those numbers
would be audited just to verify what's been given to the Transportation Committee.

So on that note, I would just be open to questions and really hope that the Transportation Committee will take a hard look at this operation. It's been built -- I come from Bristol. I know, on a daily basis, I see very, very few bus riders, and I know that there are numerous times when it's empty. Supposedly, it operates 17 hours a day. I've said before in the past, if it's losing that much money, why do we have to operate it 17 hours a day, especially in this particular climate. So, I'd be happy to take any questions, and again, I thank you very much for hearing me out on this testimony on behalf of the House Republicans.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative Betts, for your testimony. We've noted that, yes, the House Republicans submitted a caucus bill on this, as well as Senate Republicans, and we thought it was important to have at least one of those bills heard in the Committee, because you do raise questions and concerns that we've heard in this building and in the general public for a couple of years. And, so I do appreciate you coming here and sharing that perspective.

REP. BETTS (78TH): The one thing I want to emphasize for the members, and I'm on Appropriations, but I think it's very important to know that we've had three years of federal subsidy, and we've known that from the very beginning. I'm not aware of anything in the budget, and I haven't looked at it in the proposed budget for the governor, to cover that $22 million dollars that we are now, or whatever it turns out to be, that we are
now a hundred percent responsible for paying as the federal government does not, and correct me if I'm wrong, they are not obligated and have not committed to give another penny after those three years. So that's a very significant number to be aware of.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Are there any questions, Representative Devlin?

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Representative Betts for being here to kick off our hearing this morning. And I appreciate your testimony on Senate Bill 407. I think, you know, as we talk about our transportation infrastructure, buses are certainly an important part of the multimodal transportation systems that we want to have. But I think since the get-go, you've raised some really good points about the cost of the busway, it's going in at $560, and to my knowledge, we have not seen what the ultimate final costs are. But more troubling, and perhaps we'll be able to get this information from the Department of Transportation, is when even ridership information is requested, it's comingled, ridership information with what was the existing bus lanes. I'm a little bit shocked to hear the per-rider subsidy of over six dollars a rider, particularly when the fares are sort of on an honor system basis. We understand that they are checked every so often, but it is not as strict as a passenger, say, riding a Metro North train, in terms of paying fares or other busways, as well. So I thank you for bringing that to our attention. We will have, I think, the Secretary before us perhaps this week, so we can learn more about the $22 million dollars that will be coming from Connecticut taxpayers to pay for the annual
subsidies. But thank you for raising these issues and for testifying today.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you Representative, oh sorry, Senator Martin, followed by Representative Morin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Representative Betts. I'm, you know, coming from the same neck of the woods, so to speak. You know, I also see the empty buses on a regular basis and almost at every meeting I go to in my district, or in our district, we hear it from our constituents about why do we have buses coming into Bristol when they're empty, you know, and it's on a regular basis.

I do have just one quick question. You said it was $26 million dollars a year to operate, and it's currently where it's being, part of it was being subsidized by the federal government, and that is going away. So it sounds like we are going to be at a cost of $26 million dollars a year the state of Connecticut will be paying for. Do you know if we decide to change the schedule in any way or we stop having buses in Bristol or throughout the schedules that they've selected here, would we lose any type of funding that, would we have to reimburse the federal government for monies that they've already given us?

REP. BETTS (78TH): I don't know the specific answer, but I will be very surprised if we lost any federal funding. I think the real concern is $26 million going into last year is how much we lost. If it continues to grow, and mass transportation typically loses money, but if it continues to grow, then it could be a lot more than $26 million. I'm not here to advocate eliminating the system, because
it's already been built. But I am recommending and suggesting the Committee take a look at how many hours it operates, because the demand is not there. It should not be operating, for example, in my mind at midnight. And if it is, then why isn't there a greater demand for that service if there's a need to operate at 4 a.m. in the morning? I've been up a couple times during that time, and I don't want to overgeneralize, but I've never seen anybody on there at 4 a.m. in the morning. I know it works for New Britain, but not all the communities, and I don't think it's lived up to expectations in terms of ridership and the demand for it. But I am very concerned about the operating cost growing, and that's why I think they can look at reducing the number of hours makes sense in that light. But, to answer your question, I don't see why we would lose federal funding. But I have not researched that. But I would be surprised if we did, because that was supposed to be going for the capital infrastructure and in just three limited years, and then after that, it's on the state.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. BETTS (78TH): The one other thing, if I could add, I don't know if this problem's been solved, but the drivers, I understand, had difficulty being able to find places to go to the bathroom. And I've read numerous times, as I'm sure probably several of you have, that they've had to wear diapers to be able to deal with that situation. I'm just curious as to whether that's been resolved, or what's been done to kind of alleviate that problem. Because to me, that seems like a very serious situation.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative Betts. That is an anecdote I had not heard. But I do know that the Commissioner has repeatedly mentioned that he's looking to investigate ways to provide ample breaktimes for all transit drivers, whether they be CT transit riders, drivers, or Fastrak riders, or train drivers. I think that's a situation they're working out on operations side to accommodate that concern. Representative Devlin has a quick follow-up, followed by Representative Morin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Representative, just one other thing. This bill also requests approval by the General Assembly before any expansion, correct?

REP. BETTS (78TH): Correct.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Yeah, so, again, just more accountability and oversight before there's more investment so that we can ensure we're providing the best and most efficient and effective transportation system that we can.

REP. BETTS (78TH): Well, not only that, but we've had situations like this with schools where if you're really losing a lot of money, I don't see how you can expand without dealing with the significant growing deficiency in operation loss. If the expansion more than offsets that and helps to subsidize it, that's one thing. But I certainly think it's the role of the legislature to made aware of it, ask questions about it, because we certainly don't want to be criticized by our constituents by saying, "How could you possibly expand something when you're losing this much money now?"
REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Right. Well, I'm hopeful we'll see an integrative plan from our new Commissioner that addresses our broader issues and includes all these various facets so that we can have a sound approach for going forward. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Representative Betts. How are you today?

REP. BETTS (78TH): I'm very good, thank you.

REP. MORIN (28TH): That's good. Better than me, I think. So I -- it's not a surprise where you're coming from. I've been --You and I -- Well, I've been listening to your discussions over the years on this issue. I think an area where we agree on it is just the transparency of information. I think it's certainly reasonable to get those numbers and such from the department, ridership, all that stuff. I agree with you and the Republican House caucus on that. I guess where I have to ask you some questions where I think we might disagree a little bit, mass transit, mass transit throughout the state of Connecticut. Is the ridership on Shore Line East and Metro North, is that subsidized by the state? Do you know?

REP. BETTS (78TH): I don't know, but I would assume it is. And mass transit, by the way, as I mentioned earlier, is always gonna be subsidized.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Correct.

REP. BETTS (78TH): Just by definition and by history.
REP. MORIN (28TH): Right. So -- Is Metro North, not quite as much? Shore Line East, a lot of money. And I haven't heard you make a call to have us look at the expense of Shore Line East, because that is a very expensive -- Well, it's a high cost to the state of Connecticut. There's a value to it. And I think the arguments that'll be made for the busway, this is a relatively new process. I know people can pick and, or can say one way or the other. I respect that, that it may be good or not, but I remember listening to the Commissioner of Transportation, former Commissioner, talk about how these things are built and how to build it for success is consistency of times, consistency of buses running, and service. So what's your thoughts on that? I guess I'm just concerned because I don't know that -- I get concerned what I hear that we as a legislature wanna start getting involved in the things that we pay people and we have agencies that operate these systems and run them and design them and maintain them, that now we're gonna start getting involved in determining how they operate. Can you expand on that, please?

REP. BETTS (78TH): Yeah, and I completely agree with you about that. I'm not, as people know, I am not a micromanager. I think that agencies are assigned responsibilities, and that's their job. The only reason why this comes to the forefront is this has been going on for the better part of at least six years, and I'm really troubled by not only the lack of transparency, but frankly, the amount of misinformation that's been given pertaining to this new project. And I'm not here anymore -- The debate's over about whether we should have it or not. I'm not here anymore about talking about the
elimination of it. I'm talking about trying to make it more efficient and more reasonable until the demand is built up to justify what was the original estimate for utilizing the busway. I think all of us can agree that when you're losing this kind of money, to operate from, you know, 1:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m., you know, for 17 hours is crazy. There's absolutely no demand at all, and if there is, I'd like to see the evidence for operating that particular route for 17 hours. There's just nobody there, you know. And in terms of micromanaging it, I think it's more the idea that the Department has invited us to do that because you have year in, year out, failed to provide a report. I still don't understand how the Transportation Committee has not been able to get a final report on a $560 million dollar project and have it audited. It's gotta be at least four years since this has been going on. I just don't understand that. You know, I think we -- You now, all you have to do is just tell us what you did. I'm not making any judgement about it. But why have we not been able to get that? You know, this is big money. If we need to be able to help them or support it in some way, then let's do that. But, to me this is just flat-out wrong, and we are leaving ourselves I think open to justifiable criticism for not monitoring people and just saying, "Hey, look, you've been given this kind of money. Tell us how and where the money was spent and is it living up to expectations in terms of ridership, and if it's not, what are you doing to try and improve that." Is that not a reasonable approach to take?

REP. MORIN (28TH): As I said in my beginning comments, I don't disagree with you on that. I agree with you that we should be trying to optimize
ridership. We should be getting -- I'm great with getting the numbers, letting us know what's going on. But as far as -- I guess where we just differentiate is, what's the definition of success. And I would hesitate on the death knell to anything is when we start picking and choosing bus routes or train schedules as a legislature versus letting the people that do them, that operate them look at that. I'm all good with getting the numbers and then, you know, if we have to sit down with the leaders of the Transportation, the Department of Transportation and have those discussions, absolutely, Representative. But, again, I look at -- You know, there's been a whole lot of complaints about what we're doing with the busway. But I've heard the mayor of New Britain. I've seen -- speak very highly of what it's done for her city and ridership there. I've seen West Hartford developing around it. I see people using it and seeing some positive sides to it. We never hear that. We never recognize that. And what's happening today in almost everything we do in this building and around is people just pick the daylight out of everything they don't like, but never speak about any of the positives. And we need to stop with that, and I'm willing to meet you halfway on -- We should be getting that information. It's the right thing for the department to do. We deserve to see it. But on the flipside, we need to start looking at ways -- And, again, we all ride the highways to get in here. And my colleagues that live in Fairfield County, they get to have a lot more fun that I do even. But it took me, on Friday, to get home from East Winter -- I live on Wethersfield. It took me almost an hour to drive 20 miles. So I get it. But the one way we're gonna be able to address some of these issues is to try to
figure out a way to get people out of their cars. Now, if people don't want to do it, they're not gonna do it. But I think just cutting this because we don't like the expense of it -- While I respect the expense, Representative Betts, I do, and I respect your take on it. I just think that we need to look at it from a more transit-oriented and expert-oriented, decision-making process than just us saying, "Hey, this costs X amount of dollars. Let's cut X amount of dollars and you make it work with that," because I think that's a -- In that mode, I think we're in a road to failure. But I'll certainly listen to more and, like I said, we don't disagree on all of this, so I look forward to working with all of you.

REP. BETTS (78TH): Thank you. And to be sure, we're in agreement about it's not the legislature's job to pick out routes or to micromanage. Okay, and it has transformed New Britain. I've never said it hasn't had benefits. What I've said is taxpayers, I think, expect us, whether it's with mass transit or whatever, and mass transit will lose money. It's designed. That's what happens. We're subsidizing it. But in this case, I think what we're raising is appropriate because nobody has a handle or an understanding. I couldn't defend or explain how this operation has been going for the last few years based on what I think has been very tardy and incomplete reports on it. And the idea of being able to reduce hours I do think is appropriate. But it's up to the DOT to come to you and the legislature and say, "Here are some suggestions on what we're gonna do to try and control the expenses." Because it's not a sieve. I mean, we're just not in the position to be able to absorb these
kind of losses. And certainly, it's not unreasonable to reduce hours if people are not riding the buses. But we have a lot in common with that. I just -- No way do I sit there -- I'm not trying to eliminate it. I'm not trying to determine the routes. I'm just trying to say, "Please give us the facts," and "What are you doing to try and control the cost?" because there are people that are not riding on it. It has done well for New Britain. It's had some benefits to West Hartford. It is not for Newington or Bristol. And on a daily basis, on a daily basis, four years later, I continually get remarks from constituents who are really quite upset at seeing these empty buses. So I thank you very much.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Mr. Chairman, just -- if I can, so have you asked for -- 'Cause this bill does actually prohibit or will determine whether they can do another route or such. That's what this bill does.

REP. BETTS (78TH): Expansion, I think, is appropriate in light of the deficit and in light of the fact that we haven't had a report on the actual cost and how things are operating now, other than we know that it's $26 million, and we're not gonna get any more money from the federal government. I don't believe that's unreasonable or unfair, and in fact, I think that's really appropriate for us as a body to take a look at.

REP. MORIN (28TH): So have you requested the same information from Shore Line East and the operators of that and from Metro North? Because that's an issue, I think, that -- you know, there's times -- Well, Metro North is probably never empty. Let's
not kid ourselves there. But Shore Line East, is that something that you think we should be looking at? And again, if you're gonna look at apples and apples, we have to look at what we're doing statewide, because I think at some point, there are discussions that will have to be had in -- It is something that the state has to commit to or not. I don't think we can go partway with this. But, again, I do appreciate your input and I respect your opinion.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative Morin. Are there additional questions? Seeing none. Just to follow up, I think you have an issue that actually transcends party or politics. People want to understand these recent expenditures that we've made in the state through the Department of Transportation. I think Representative Morin makes a series of valid points about what we should expect as far as data on the efficiency and the effectiveness of those routes. Anecdotally, what do know though? We have mayors from both parties coming here saying, "My goodness! CTfastrak is a great thing for my town!" We have First Selectmen and mayors asking for additional stops on CTfastrak because the business community is saying, "This is an incredible development in our communities. We would love to be a part of it." We have had submissions from legislators of both parties saying, hey, would we look at expanding into other communities because we would like to take part of that. But you raise, I think, what is a very relevant point. As we struggle with transportation expenditures and what we invest in as a state, I think it is responsible for this Committee, myself as Chair, Representative Devlin as a Ranking Member
in the House, Senator Leone and Senator Martin on the Senate side, it is imperative for us to get that information for our constituents and for our colleagues to ensure that these expenditures that we are making are effectively managed. So, I do appreciate for raising this issue and I look forward to working with you as we move forward. Thank you.

REP. BETTS (78TH): I thank you, and I thank the members of the Committee.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Kevin Dillon.

KEVIN DILLON: Good morning, Chair Lemar, Ranking Members Martin and Devlin, members of the Committee. My name's Kevin Dillon. I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut Airport Authority. I'm here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 869, AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE CONNECTICUT AIRPORT AUTHORITY REGARDING NONBUDGETED EXPENDITURES, THE CONNECTICUT AIRPORT AND AVIATION ACCOUNT, AND THE SECURITY EXEMPTION UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT. Before I start, I certainly want to thank Representative Zawistowski who proposed a number of bills that were compiled into this legislation. Representative Zawistowski has been very helpful to the airport and certainly serves our community very well.

I've submitted written testimony, so I'm gonna summarize very briefly what's in that testimony. But the creation of the CAA, which was initiated by this Committee, has proven to be a very successful quasi-public agency. In fact, in 2018, we ended the year growing by 3.6 percent. That was the sixth consecutive year that we've grown at Bradley Airport since taking over as the CAA. Last year, we added St. Louis nonstop service, welcomed Frontier
Airlines to the airport, and were able to lock down Aer Lingus to provide at least four more years of service out of the airport. We also closed on a major cargo development at the airport that brought 200 jobs to Bradley Airport, our bond rating was increased again by Standard & Poor's last year, we were ranked the third best airport by Conde Nast reader's poll last year, we completed a 20-year $1.4 billion master plan for the airport, and we've advanced capital development at all of our airports, so I certainly thank the Committee for all your help in achieving that success.

This particular bill, Senate Bill 869, does a couple of things for the CAA. Section 1 would increase the CAA Board ability to authorize myself as the Executive Director to make up to $1 million dollars of nonbudgeted expenditure. When the CAA was first created, that number was at $5,000 dollars. Last year, it was increased to $500,000 dollars. We're looking to bring it to a million dollars because of the cost of operating the airport. And this particular section would only be exercised in emergency situations where the operation of the airport was impacted and needed to be restored. There's notification requirements that have to be made to the Board, if this was ever exercised, that the Board has to be advised within 24 hours. But if you look at items such as if there was an accident at the airport today and we had to remove an aircraft from the runway, that alone would cost us a million dollars to be able to accomplish that.

Section 2 would adjust the administration of the Connecticut Airport and Aviation account. The Committee may recall last year, there was a restricted account, a non-lapsing restricted account
created to collect aviation fuel tax revenues. The FAA determined that aviation fuel tax revenues could not be used for the benefit of the general fund. Rather, those revenues have to be used for the benefit of aviation and airports here in the state. What happens with that account, money is transferred from the Department of Revenue, which ultimately goes to OPM and the Department of Transportation, and then it's ultimately transferred to the CAA; however, all of that touching of the funds delays the processing of the funds, and in fact, last year, we actually had to suspend the capital program for airports here in the state simply because of the delay in getting that money transferred to the CAA. So this section of the bill would allow the money to flow directly from the Department of Revenue to the Connecticut Airport Authority.

Section 3 and 5 of the bill would provide the CAA the ability to make determinations about FOIA requests that come in related to security matters. Today, the best we can tell is that the existing statute requires us to go to the Department of Administrative Services to make that determination on our behalf. We do think it was an oversight from the point when the CAA was created that we were now taken out from underneath the state and put into a quasi-public agency, that this was not addressed. And our biggest concern here is we do enter into a lot of agreements with federal agencies, the Transportation Security Administration in particular, and we are concerned if there is a day where DAS makes a different determination that the airport does and that would put us in violation of some of those agreements that we have in place with the Transportation Security Administration. It's
interesting to point out that the FOIA Commission does agree with us that this change should be made.

Section 4 also addresses another point under the Freedom of Information statute that we think is an oversight in the statute as well where state agencies can withhold responses that they receive from RFPs that they issue; however, it doesn’t operate in the opposite. And the reason, when you think it through, why that exemption is there for withholding responses we receive for RFPs that we issue, it [inaudible 00:32:38] the state in a better negotiating position, while it's also true in the opposite that if we're responding to RFPs, we need to protect our negotiating position from others that are responding to the RFPs. And across the state, there may not be a lot of departments that do respond to RFPs, but as the Airport Authority, we frequently respond to RFPs when airlines ask for a new service or cargo companies are looking to come to the airport.

And then the last item I'd ask the Committee to consider is the potential of JFS language to address our increasing fringe benefit costs at the airport. If you look at what we're paying today in terms of fringe benefits, for our non-Public Safety staff, we're paying 93.36 percent of base salary for fringe benefits. And when you look at what goes into that fringe benefit cost, about 65 percent of that is related to the retirement system. With our non-Public -- Public Safety employees, it's even worse. That number's 122.93 percent of base salary we're paying towards fringe benefits. So we are asking the Committee to consider a proposal that we have to remove the CAA non-classified positions from the state retirement system. There's about 30 positions
that would fall into that category. We're not talking about any unionized positions. But if all of our Tier 3 and 4 folks at the airport opted out of the system -- and we would only apply this to folks that wanted to opt out as it related to existing employees, and then require new employees on a date certain to enter into a 401k type plan. But if all of our 3 and 4 Tier employees opted out, we would have an immediate savings of $1.26 million as it relates to our retirement benefits. When you look at just the natural attrition that we have at the airport, we would also accrue another $175 thousand dollars per year in benefit. And if we got to the point where all of our unclassified employees were outside the system, we'd be saving about $2.74 million in terms of our benefit cost. And that's extremely important to us as we continue to try to be competitive with other airports. Look at T.F. Green Airport over in Rhode Island, for example. They are in a 401 plan. They're contributing 8 percent per employee. We're contributing, as I said before, about 65 percent per employee. And we need to make sure that our costs stay competitive so that we can continue the success that we've enjoyed at the airport and continue to attract new airlines. So with that, I'll end. As I said, I did submit written testimony that's a little bit more extensive than that. But I'd be happy handle any questions that you might have.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Dillon, for your testimony this morning and for making it in through the weather. Hopefully, you didn't have to fly anywhere today. I know there are a few questions of the Committee, so if you can bear with us. Representative Devlin.
REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [inaudible 00:36:06] however. Nice to see you this morning. Thank you for being here.

KEVIN DILLON: Thank you.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): You know, just some of your early comments, I have to say, Bradley's one of the most convenient airports to fly out of. I happen to live in Fairfield, so it's sort of equidistant from LaGuardia, which is actually going through amazing transformation right now.

KEVIN DILLON: Absolutely.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Had the recent opportunity to fly out, but Bradley is always a favorite for the convenience, the ease of parking, it's just easy to get through, and so I think you're doing a great job. As well as keeping Aer Lingus here. So thank you for that.

But I do just have two questions for you. And just to clarify what you were saying, because the fringe rates that you were quoting are pretty remarkable of over 93 percent and almost 123 percent. So your suggestion is to freeze those employees within their existing, sort of grandfather where they are and then move them in to more of a defined contribution plan versus a defined benefit plan. Is that right?

KEVIN DILLON: That's correct. And, again, it's important to point out, we're only talking about unclassified employees. The state continues to negotiate on behalf of our unionized employees. So we at the CAA do not have any direct control over what our unionized employees are compensated. So we're talking about 30 unclassified folks, and
that's exactly it. What we would wanna do is on a date certain, any new employees coming in, mandate that they would go into a 401, but we would give the existing unclassified employees the ability to opt out.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay, great. And thank you for raising that. I think a report from last year or two years ago from the comptroller showed the average fringe rate was about 56 percent, so I kinda wanna look in and see where those numbers are, because what you're talking about is pretty amazing. Regarding the FOIA pieces, and if you could just refresh my memory, because maybe this is totally separate, but having served on GAE for the past couple of years, it does recall that FOIA issues around airport were commonly raised. Is this the same issue that has been addressed or tried to be addressed through GAE, and if so, is it also currently happening through that committee?

KEVIN DILLON: Yes, there's also a bill going through GAE. It's House Bill 5110. That's dealing with the FOIA issue, although it only deals with the security exemption piece. In this legislation here, Senate Bill 869, it deals with the security piece, as well as that RFP piece. But, again, this is the same issue that we've been trying to address. You may be aware, last year the former Commissioner of DAS agreed with us that this should be changed. The FOIA Commission has agreed on both points, the security piece as well as the RFP piece, that it should be changed. We're a little bit baffled as to why this has not gone through. We do enter into some extensive agreements with the Transportation Security Administration. I think the former DAS Commissioner essentially acknowledged that they
really don't have the expertise on their side to be dealing with some of these determinations that we have to make and what would put us in violation with TSA agreements or not. Because the federal government does require us to treat certain information as security-sensitive information.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay, great. Thank you for that clarification. I appreciate your testimony today. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative -- Sorry, Senator Martin, followed by Representative Zawistowski.

SEN. MARTIN (31ST): Thank you, Mr. Chair. One quick question regarding -- there was an ask for a million dollars. Did I understand that correctly? Can you -- Currently, what amount do you -- Sounded like you almost have sort of a blank card here or blank check, so to speak, of a -- You're asking for a million dollars. What would you use that money for and what do you currently have now, and what -- If so, what do you use it for?

KEVIN DILLON: Sure. The current authorization is for half a million dollars. We're looking to bring that to a million. And that would allow the Airport Authority Board, if they chose, to delegate that authorization to me as the Executive Director to expend up to $1 million dollars on non-budgeted items only in situations where there's an emergency condition at the airport where the restoration of operations depends on making that expenditure. All right. And just to point out, you know, as I said earlier, if, God forbid, you had an accident at the airport this afternoon and we could not get an airline to remove the aircraft from the runway, we'd
have to undertake that work ourselves. You would expend at least a million dollars on that alone, let alone the other things that would have to be taken care of during an emergency of that magnitude. So it's really just for emergency situations to ensure that the airport could continue operating. Because in that particular situation, if we did not remove the aircraft, we had to shut down the runway, you're talking about millions of dollars of impact to the airlines and certainly the inconvenience to the traveling public.

SEN. MARTIN (31ST): Well, I'm assuming that you would be moving those airplanes. So if you have currently a half a million dollars, it's not on an annual basis, correct? That you're asking for this half a million?

KEVIN DILLON: It's for any non-budgeted event that would occur at the airport, but it's a --

SEN. MARTIN (31ST): It's a one type -- You have this money currently now, half a million dollars. It's not on an annual basis.

KEVIN DILLON: That's correct.

SEN. MARTIN (31ST): Okay. And now you're asking us to increase it to a million. If we say no, what's the process should something occur for these non-budgeted items and you have this major expense that you have to deal with. What's the process?

KEVIN DILLON: We would have to try to collect a quorum of the Board to conduct a board meeting to authorize that to happen. So that's what we're trying to get across. In an emergency situation, that just would be unrealistic to do.
SEN. MARTIN (31ST): And do you currently have half a million dollars at your disposal now?

KEVIN DILLON: That's right.

SEN. MARTIN (31ST): That hasn't been used?

KEVIN DILLON: No. It has not.

SEN. MARTIN (31ST): So there's a half a million dollars there now?

KEVIN DILLON: That's correct.

SEN. MARTIN (31ST): Okay, thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Senator Martin. Representative Zawistowski, followed by Representative Reyes and Representative Altobello.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. Thank you for coming up here. The airport was open bright and early. I could tell because I live two miles from it and I could hear the planes, so it's really very good to hear the planes because, you know, Bradley has so few traffic, true weather delays or cancellations compared to other airports. It's always good to see.

As you know, I represent three of the four towns in the Bradley development area. And it really good news to see the announcements in the paper about increased passengers, passenger satisfaction. But what I particularly am interested in is the increase in cargo facilities. It's something that directly impacts jobs. As Bradley Airport goes, it really impacts my district and also impacts North Central Connecticut as a whole. Could you elaborate a
little bit on what you're doing with cargo right now?

KEVIN DILLON: Yeah, as I said, last year we were lucky enough to lock down an agreement with Pinnacle Aviation who is the cargo handler for Amazon to bring that Amazon presence to the airport. They're currently leasing 90,000 square feet at the airport, and that has generated about 200 jobs. That's expected to grow significantly as they continue to more efficiently use that 90,000 square feet. So we're out there constantly trying to develop the cargo business. There's, I believe, a lot of opportunity for us out there. Unfortunately, when the airport was operated by the state, a lot of those opportunities could not be pursued for a variety of reasons. But being a quasi-public agency, we have the ability to go out there and respond quickly to a lot of these requests and a lot of these potential agreements that are out there. So I do think you're gonna continue to see cargo grow at the airport. Cargo doesn't necessarily give the biggest financial return to the airport as compared to passenger service. But cargo is a huge generator of employment. So it's extremely important for us. And that's why we are somewhat concerned with some of the legislative activity that we're seeing this session that would really start to hamper our ability to respond entrepreneurially or quickly to opportunities that are out there. I can give you two examples: Senate Bill 917 and Senate Bill 604. Senate Bill 604, in particular, would require any contract that we would enter into, consultant contract, over $50,000 dollars to be reviewed by the Attorney General's office and then potentially come to this Committee for review as
well. I could tell you, the arrangement that we entered into with Amazon would have never happened if that legislation was in place, because we just would not have been able to respond timely enough. I mean it's one of the things that when I first came here to Connecticut -- And I think you're aware, I've served on a number of airports across the country in my career. I was extremely surprised by the bureaucracy that the DOT was operating under. In my first six months here, I had to operate, unfortunately, under that DOT bureaucracy where every agreement that the DOT needed to enter into had to go to OPM for approval. OPM simply did not have the expertise in house to opine on those agreements, so in a lot of respects, the agreements just languished. We're expecting the same thing will happen if this legislation passes where these agreements will sit in the Attorney General's office. If you look at the CAA, we alone right now have 78 open contracts that are for more than $50,000 dollars. Many of them would fall under this legislation. I can't imagine the workload that would accrue to the Attorney General's office if this bill passes, and certainly the success that I think we've enjoyed at the airport would come to a grinding halt. So I know that was a long answer to your question about cargo development, but it's an important piece that I think does have to be considered.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you. And I do know about your concerns about those two particular bills and I have passed that along to some of the colleagues. It's good to hear a more detailed explanation about how that would impact your ongoing and future operations. A quick follow-up on
Senator, excuse me, Senator Martin's question before. I knew that before [laughing]. Anyway, the request for additional emergency funds, these are not funds that would be coming from the state budget, is that correct? It would be coming from operating funds from Bradley?

KEVIN DILLON: That's correct. All of the funds that are utilized at Bradley come from our own user fees. We don't rely on the state general fund. We live and die by our own revenue, so if we were to expend those funds, it would come out of available funds at the airport. Right now, the airport has over $90 million dollars of unrestricted cash that's available.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you. I just wanted to make sure that was clear, because I'm not sure that when Senator Martin left, that that was necessarily clear at that point. And also, one last question, if you don't mind, Mr. Chair, the JFS language that you're suggesting on the fringe benefits, have you included any fact and figures in your written testimony on this?

KEVIN DILLON: Yes, it's in the written testimony.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): You have? Okay. I'll be interested in taking a closer look that. Thank you very much.

KEVIN DILLON: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative Zawistowski. I would caution the Committee, it's very, very unlikely that we will consider labor-related issues on JFS consideration on the Transportation Committee. But I do understand it as
a priority of the CAA and those who've submitted to it. I think we determined quite early in the process that that would be difficult for this Committee to consider without the relevant background and expertise to have a full public hearing here in Transportation. Thank you. Representative Reyes, followed by Representative Altolbello, followed by Representative Morin.

REP. REYES (75TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sir, good morning. Thank you very much for making it here this morning. As a constituent that travels through Bradley and has been doing it since the 90s, I have to tell you, I'm thoroughly impressed with the upgrades and what's happened at Bradly, in fact, so much so that I rarely go to New York anymore. And it's great to see what's happening on the grounds there. And every time I go there, it seems like the shifting of the parking's a little different, but it's all for a good thing, and I think you guys are going in the right direction. So I applaud that effort.

My first question to you is, has there ever been an event, an expenditure that's ever gone over half a million dollars since you've been there?

KEVIN DILLON: Under the emergency provision?

REP. REYES (75TH): Yes, sir.

KEVIN DILLON: No, there has not been.

REP. REYES (75TH): Never has been. And would you consider any of that sensitive information or risk in any way?

KEVIN DILLON: No.
REP. REYES (75TH):  No? Okay. Fair enough. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. LEMAR (96TH):  Thank you, Representative Altobello.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND):  Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning.

KEVIN DILLON:  Good morning.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND):  In Section 1, in order to trigger the million dollar expenditure, there would have to be a certain circumstance that happens at the airport and makes it nonusable, but on notification, it says, "Not less than 24 hours after the Executive Director makes such nonbudgeted expenditure, the Executive Director shall provide notification to the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the Board of the amount and of the reason for it." Is there a reason for that language? One or the other? Why wouldn't you just notify the whole Board simultaneously?

KEVIN DILLON:  Well, again, it's -- We want an affirmative connection to the Chair. Sometimes, I can't reach out to every board member or make contact with every board member. But, certainly, we would be following up at the next board meeting with all of the board members. But this provision is in there so that there is an affirmative connection that I have to speak to one of those two individuals.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND):  So you're saying that you wouldn't notify the board that you spent several million dollars --

KEVIN DILLON:  No, we would.
REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): -- until the next meeting, or -- The language looks a little funny. I was just wondering if we could clean it up a little.

KEVIN DILLON: No, I mean the attempt is, you know, certainly transparency on this to notify the board. I guess the point I'm trying to get across though is there's an affirmative conversation that needs to happen between myself and the Chair and the Vice Chair if this is triggered.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): So if we put in something like "In the event that the Chairperson is not able to be contacted, the Vice Chair would suffice." Something to that -- Is that your [Crosstalk]?

KEVIN DILLON: Sure, yes. That'd be fine.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): I mean, you're not just gonna -- You don't like the Chairman anymore, you're just gonna go to the Vice Chair. Then it probably doesn’t make much sense.

KEVIN DILLON: [laughing] No. That would be fine.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): And in Section 2 of the Bill, the Connecticut Airport and Aviation account, is that the account that's presently holding approximately $90 million dollars?

KEVIN DILLON: No.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): No. Could you explain that?

KEVIN DILLON: This is an account that holds the fuel taxes that are related to aviation fuel sales. The FAA made a determination a number of years ago that any state that collected an aviation fuel tax had to utilize the proceeds of the tax for aviation purposes. It could not be used for the general
fund. On an annual basis, this collection amounts to somewhere between $7 to 8 million dollars. The $90 million dollars that I referenced earlier is the unrestricted cash fund of Bradley Airport that has to be used for the benefit of Bradley Airport.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): And so Section 2 of the bill would, it would name you as the person who could authorize expenditures instead of the Commissioner of Transportation. Is that correct?

KEVIN DILLON: It would name the CAA, yes.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): Was that just an oversight when we transferred authority of the airport over or?

KEVIN DILLON: No, this is a relatively new account. I believe this account was just established about a year and a half ago. So I don't think it was an oversight of legislation, and in fact, the FAA really only made that determination about two to three years ago. Why it was established that way, I can't really tell you.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): And the Commissioner of Transportation, do you think they might have any objection to this or is it just one less thing for them to do?

KEVIN DILLON: Well, I certainly don't want to speak for the current Commissioner. I've had conversations in the past with Commissioner Redeker, who I think was very supportive of just having it go to the CAA. This is just a bureaucratic piece of work that accrues to them that I think they'd rather not have.
REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): Sounds good to me too, actually. And as far as the pension situation, have you talked to Comptroller Lembo's office?

KEVIN DILLON: I have not had direct conversations with his office, no.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): I was watching a public hearing the other day when they had extensive conversations about benefits and why they are averaged across all sorts of departments and so on and so forth, and -- And you talked about new hires. There is a Tier 4, which is a hybrid 401k that you may or may not be aware of, and I don't know if that would work for your new hires going forward, if you were able to do that.

KEVIN DILLON: The benefit that we're looking for would not accrue to us by utilizing that plan because of what you just mentioned that the costs of the retirement system are averaged over the employees. We're looking that any new employee coming into the CAA is never put into the state retirement system and that we simply start a separate 401 plan for those new employees.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): I think there are a lot of agencies that would love to do that.

KEVIN DILLON: I'm sure there are.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Hello, Mr. Dillon. Good morning.
KEVIN DILLON: Good morning.

REP. MORIN (28TH): I guess that most of the questions frankly have been answered and answered well. I understand. You just brought something up that kind of made me want the Committee to at least pay attention to. You talked about how, I think you said, expenditures of $50 grand or whatever have to go, made to the Attorney General -- I know it's not in our Committee, but, boy, I think that was the biggest downfall of Bradley when it was operated by DOT. We put the Airport Authority in place so we could actually make the place vibrant, proactive, modern, everything that I've heard people say about why they like going there now. So we might maybe well wanna just keep our eyes on that and make sure that we don't -- While I know we all have to want transparency and we want everything to be done right, we still wanna -- [laughing] We don't want to tie both your hands behind your back. Maybe just one, but not two. And so I'll be interested. I'm gonna be following those bills. Thanks to you for bringing them up. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

KEVIN DILLON: If I could, I certainly appreciate those comments, Representative, and, you know, on the point, I do think the intention of these bills is about transparency, but there's a lot of ways to achieve that transparency without tying our hands behind our backs. I mean, we as the CAA voluntarily put all of our financial transactions on the Comptroller's website, so anything that we're expending on anything in the CAA is available there, and certainly, you know, we'd be prepared to come to this Committee and report everything that we're doing. We just don't want on a real-time basis to be hung up in terms of moving forward in taking
advantage of the opportunities that have made us much more entrepreneurial. Thanks.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. As you can see, there's some work to do on this, and I look forward to working with you over the next few weeks to get this out of Committee. Thank you very much.

KEVIN DILLON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): We have passed the hour dedicated towards public officials solely, so we'll move on to the public sign-up list. As a reminder, due to the delay in getting started this morning and the lack of availability of a lottery and sign-up system, we are taking sign-ups here in the Committee room, and our clerks will accommodate any requests as they come in. You'll be added to the end of the list. As of right now, we have about 12 members of the public who are signed up on this side. The first person signed up today is Joe Sculley, to be followed by Michele Jacklin.

JOE SCULLEY: Chairman Lemar, Ranking Member Devlin, and Committee members, thank you for this opportunity to testify. Joe Sculley, president of Motor Transport Association of Connecticut. I wanted to come today to talk a little bit about our concern with Senate Bill 423 and our concern. The creation of a Connecticut Transportation Authority. I know there are similar things on the agenda for Wednesday, but Wednesday I plan to focus more on tolls. So to talk about the possible creation of this quasi-government body -- We don't have language for this bill. We do have language for similar bills, both this year and in previous years. One of the things that this body could do is accrue debt. I would point out that that is in direct conflict
with Governor Lamont's budget proposal. He wants to minimize debt. These proposals have been billed as being just like the MTA in New York, which I don't understand why we want to be like the MTA in New York. They have sky-high tolls on highways, bridges, tunnels, everywhere, all over New York, and at $38 billion dollars in debt, their bond ratings were just downgraded by S&P Global. A recent *Bloomberg* news article talked about rapidly rising payroll, healthcare costs, debt, labor expenses. Why do we wanna -- We already have some of those problems. Why do we wanna go there again through a quasi-government body? Another example, the Pennsylvania Turnpike. They have had toll increases for 11 straight years. They've already announced that they will raise tolls for the next 25 consecutive years. That prompted the governor of Pennsylvania to say that people who are using the turnpike are paying too much. The turnpike is driving business away from Pennsylvania. So my question is, if quasi-government bodies focusing on transportation are so great, why don't any of these bodies have any money? We can't take the risk of going down this same road here in Connecticut. And I would just I guess conclude these remarks by referencing a recent *Connecticut Mirror* article written by Mark Pazniokas, which I was very pleased to see because it substantiates things I've been saying for two years. No state has ever tried to do this, which is congestion price toll on existing highway, but not just one highway, every highway in the state. Does the government of the state of Connecticut really wanna advocate everything that goes along with that to something that's never been done before? No control over toll rates, and gantry locations, and number of gantries, and anything that
goes along with that. I just think that's an incredibly slippery slope. I would say this is worse than just tolls. If people want tolls, put up a tolls bill and vote for it. Don't try to go through this quasi-government body. So I'll conclude with that and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Sculley, for your testimony today. As you know, today was our deadline to hear [inaudible 01:01:29] hearing on proposed bills, which is why this specific piece of legislation is held in public hearing today and not with the other toll or authority based public hearing that we'll have on Wednesday, which is a governor's bill and a Committee bill. So I think it's fair and good that you're here today to testify to your concerns on this bill. It is not the intention of this Committee to use this as a vehicle for the broader conversation that will take place on Wednesday.

JOE SCULLEY: Appreciate that and thank you for hearing me today speak about, you know, my concerns about this type of body, because, again, I know Wednesday I have plenty of other remarks on tolls itself and money and transportation spending. So I appreciate it.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Sculley, for being here. You raised a couple of interesting points. And while this is still a concept bill, you're right. There was a bill fleshed out last session, I
believe, under the same name. And we do have similar bills on our agenda for Wednesday.

But two in particular are creating this new sort of bureaucracy of appointed people that also have the ability to hire an Executive Director and other staff as needed. The other piece that you pointed out was its ability potentially to issue bonds. So there seems to be some misnomer that if we institute tolls the way that has been talked about, whether it's 83, 53, or 10 that keep adding back up to a billion dollars in revenue, that we won't need to bond anything. Yet, here we are creating a bureaucracy with the ability to bond and lots of questions if that's within or outside the bonding cap. So I do appreciate you raising those issues this morning, and I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday.

JOE SCULLEY: Thank you very much. Yeah, I look forward to being there on Wednesday as well. And I just -- I pointed out the MTA, the Pennsylvania Turnpike. There are others. New Jersey has them. You know, there's - You say, learn from your mistakes. Well, we can also learn other people's mistakes. I respectfully urge everybody to read this Bloomberg article that I link to and then ask, "Why would we want to do that?" It's the opposite of fiscal restraint, accountability, transparent government. There's just nothing good about it.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): I haven't seen your written testimony yet, or electronic version, but did that also include a link -- which I have read the article about Pennsylvania and the governor flat out saying that in fact the tolls were hurting business in the state?
JOE SCULLEY: Yes, I do link to two articles about Pennsylvania. One talking about the toll increases for 11 years and then 25 years, another one where the governor comments on how this is negatively impacting business in the state.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Right, good. Thank you for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Mr. Sculley, and --

JOE SCULLEY: Good morning.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): -- thank you for being here and sharing your testimony with us. I was curious about something. I appreciate, first off, your treating this bill today on its own without any link to what's being discussed on Wednesday. I think that's appropriate, and, you know, there are separate concerns, and some are conjoined. But I am curious as to something. Do you see some -- Do you have concerns with this bill or the creation of this authority, quite apart from whether there is a toll bill passed or not? If this were passed on its own, would you still have concerns about it?

JOE SCULLEY: Yes. I submit, with all due respect, I think the only reason for this bill is for tolls and I'm not exaggerating when I say I think that running tolls through this unaccountable quasi-government body would be a step worse than adding tolls and running through the DOT. It's not good either way. But when you set it up so that blame can be deflected -- I didn't vote for that quasi-
government body. I didn't vote to raise the toll rates. That body did. But, yeah, that's what you have in New York right now, and the rates, the tolls go up unchecked and -- Which is the goal of a body like that. I just can't believe that most people in the state of Connecticut would want something like that. So, yeah, the concern, I don’t know if there's any way you could make a body like this look good. I think there's always gonna be too many concerns there.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Well, thank you. I was actually -- As you said and Representative Devlin said, and I believe Representative Lemar said as well, we've had some language about authorities like this in the past, and certainly, they were related to tolls, but they were also in some cases, related to other subjects like prioritizing transportation projects, deciding how much to spend, deciding when they would be, in what order they would be executed, and also matters related to zoning. And so I just wondered if you were concerned about those things as well.

JOE SCULLEY: Can I -- There's an infrastructure bank bill out there, which I won't get into too much right now. I think that's along those same lines too. This would just be a quasi-government body that could determine priority of projects. It would be separate from our current government, separate from the DOT. I have a lot of other concerns with the infrastructure bank, so I'll leave it at that unless anyone asks me to elaborate on that. But, yeah, I share your concerns with that.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Yeah, well, I appreciate that. I think it is unusual that for so many things
in the state that may seem small, like the entrance fee to state parks or renewals for drivers' licenses or car registrations, must be voted on by the legislature. But here we're talking about other things that would not. So I share your concern.

JOE SCULLEY: Thank you.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Thanks very much, Mr. Sculley. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative Garibay.

REP. GARIBAY (60TH): Mr. Sculley, thank you for being here today.

JOE SCULLEY: Thank you.

REP. GARIBAY (60TH): You've mentioned New York and Pennsylvania as two that have not worked. We have tolls from Rhode Island down to North Carolina through the Midwest. Are there any that have done this that have been successful? I mean we're concentrating on the two that did not work. Have there been any success stories with the --

JOE SCULLEY: There may be. I'm not categorically stating that every single one of these has been a failure. But also, just because those states have tolls doesn't necessarily mean that it's run through a quasi-government body. Some of them are run sort of in-house, through a state Department of Transportation where there's more accountability. In some states, there - either the legislature votes to raise tolls or you have in New Hampshire they have what they call the Executive Council, which sounds like a quasi-government body, but it's really not. It's more like a committee of the Cabinet and
they have to vote to raise tolls. So there are --
Again, I'm not saying every single one is a failure, but we have many glaring ones that do show very poor examples. So --

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): At this point, I'm not for or against, but I would like to see the stats. Could there be 15 that have been very successful? That would be a different percentage against two that are not. So it'd just be interesting to see how many have these semi quasi-organizations and how many have been successful compared to those that are not.

JOE SCULLEY: Sure, yeah. I'd bet it's not 15, but --

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): I don't know [Crosstalk] that we'll be interested in those statistics or those --

JOE SCULLEY: I understand, yeah. Okay. Be happy to talk more about that with you.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Okay, thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, again, Mr. Sculley. And again, I want to reiterate, you have my commitment that I do not believe that this bill should be used as a proxy or a potential vehicle for the toll debate ongoing. Originally intended to have the toll debate on this date. We had numerous requests to move it March 6. It's been noticed and advertised that that will be the Committee's toll conversation. There are two bills on that agenda, which we think would the proper place to have the public conversation about that in a more broad, open, and honest way. I do think you are in the
right to be here recognizing the use of this authority and how it's been structured in the past. I think your comments are well placed on this bill. I do think it was most appropriate of Representative Devlin and Representative Lavielle to highlight that, that this has been the sort of vehicle that has been used for the toll conversation in the past. You have my commitment that it would be remarkably improper for us to use this vehicle as a toll debate moving forward.

JOE SCULLEY: Well, thank you again for those comments and for listening. Yeah, I felt I needed to be here, and I'll be here Wednesday as well. So thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): I'm sure we'll see you then.
Next up Michele Jacklin, followed by Mike Piscitelli.

MICHELE JACKLIN: Thank you, and good morning to Chairman Lemar, and Ranking Member Devlin, and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Michele Jacklin and I'm Legislative Co-chair of the Connecticut Council on Freedom of Information. And I am here to testify on Senate Bill 869, but only on the last part of the bill that concerns the security exemption under the Freedom of Information Act.

As you may know, CCFOI advocates on behalf of the public, the news media, and other open government advocates for the preservation of Connecticut’s nationally and internationally respected Freedom of Information Act. Our organization has been leading the way in the fight for transparency and accountability since 1955.
We oppose revising the Freedom of Information Act and giving the Connecticut Airport Authority the ability to invoke exemptions for security-related documents without oversight from another state agency. If there is uncertainty on how quasi-public agencies should respond when they have security-based concerns about an FOI request, we urge the legislature to clarify the existing process and maintain uniformity. Currently, state agencies must seek approval to withhold documents from the Department of Administrative Services. But the statutes are silent when it comes to quasi-public agencies. Why should they be granted special status? If this exemption is granted, other quasi-public agencies, particularly those that oversee natural resources or facilities that draw large crowds, will want the same freedom. Already, the Connecticut Port Authority is seeking the same exemption in a bill before the Government Administration and Elections Committee. Instead of taking a piecemeal approach, the legislature should clarify that quasi-public agencies should work with DAS or the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection in determining whether certain documents can be disclosed.

CCFOI has concerns about expanding the number of agencies that have the ability to invoke a security exemption without oversight. We certainly understand the need to prevent the disclosure of information that could result in a security risk, but we also think such claims should be made judiciously. Expanding the pool of officials who can invoke this exemption increases the chance that it could be abused to withhold records that do not pose any actual risks. Quasi-public agencies, in
particular, have had a mixed record when it comes to transparency and openness. One only has to recall Comptroller Kevin Lembo’s struggle in getting Connecticut’s quasi-public agencies, including the Connecticut Port Authority, to share even basic “checkbook-level” information for the OpenConnecticut! website.

Public officials have also had difficulty getting information from Connecticut Innovations, among other quasi-public agencies. The existing statute requiring DAS to consult with other state agencies before deciding how to respond to a request allows for a discourse on the risks posed by disclosure of particular records. We have not seen any evidence that demonstrates why the Connecticut Airport Authority should be treated differently and granted autonomy and a blanket exemption from FOIA.

I understand, by the way, that there has been conversation [beeper sound] that the -- I'm just gonna address one point, and then I'll stop. There has been conversation during the first part of this hearing about that the Airport Authority has certain obligations with the federal TSA. And I would just like to say that we have the utmost faith that the people who are at DAS would take that under consideration and do what's best for Connecticut's residents, public safety, and well-being. So we don't see that as an impediment to establishing this procedure working with DAS. Thank you, by the way, and if you have any questions, I'd try and answer them.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Are there any questions? Representative Devlin.
REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your testimony this morning. Just for clarification purposes, because listening, you know, to the Commissioner and having heard this before within GAE, it sounds like his request is legitimate. And it sounds like, from your testimony, you don't disagree with that, but what you're looking for is a more standardized, comprehensive approach as opposed to one-offs by different quasi-public agencies so that, again, there just is a consistent approach and all of that is being determined through DAS. Did I kind of characterize your position right?

MICHELLE JACKLIN: Yes, that's exactly right. That's a very good synopsis of what I tried to say in my testimony. We think there should be consistency throughout state government, and we don't see a difference between the way public agencies -- DEEP is a good example of an agency that protects our natural resources, our water supplies. You would think that they have security concerns. We don't think that public agencies should be different, should be treated differently than quasi-public agencies who have been created by an act of the legislature. They're not private; they are quasi-public. And so we're looking for consistency. And, as I mentioned, we have faith in DAS, that DAS would handle these requests appropriately and in the best interest of Connecticut citizens.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. Thank you for clarifying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative Zawistowski.
REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you for being here today, and I appreciate your work on behalf of transparency for the state of Connecticut. What I'm seeing as a little bit of a difference here, you're looking for consistency among state agencies and the quasi-publics. When you're dealing with the CAA, you're dealing with an organization that deals on an everyday basis with federal authorities, FAA and TSA. And I'm just a little bit concerned about the responsiveness that you might get from DAS as far as just making sure that they deal with things quickly when the situation requires it, and whether or not that they have the experience to deal with some of the federal issues involved. Would you care to comment on that?

MICHELLE JACKLIN: You know, I cannot speak for DAS. The only thing I would say is I have not been made aware of any problems that any state agencies, public agencies, have had with DAS concerning potential security risks. But I'm not sure how I would be made aware of that if in fact that was the case. I would just say that I think that DAS is going to be under outstanding new leadership from what I know of the new Commissioner at DAS and that DAS would respond as quickly as possible having the information that it needs so that the public's safety would not be jeopardized. I guess what I'm saying is I have faith in DAS, that it would act expeditiously. But I don't, I can't speak for DAS.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay. Thank you. Yes, actually we had the opportunity to meet the new DAS Commissioner in the Appropriations Committee and he seemed pretty responsive, but I mean he is new and we can't expect him to know everything quite yet. But thank you very much for your answer.
MICHELLE JACKLIN: You're welcome.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Are there any other questions? Seeing none. Thank you for your testimony and from your insight from the FOI Commission.

MICHELLE JACKLIN: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): The next public official and the next 11 people signed up on the public hearing list are all speaking on one issue and in favor. I didn't know if you want to come up together as a group or if you'd just rather come up individually. We'll go individually.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): All right. I think if you want to sit in those first seats, you can go up one at a time and just recognize kind of all together, but not necessarily? [laughing]

REP. LEMAR (96TH): So in the interest of expediting this for the Committee and recognizing the next 11 people are all here on the same issue, we'll try to make this work for you as well. Mr. Piscitelli.

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: Great. Thank you Chair Lemar, Ranking Member Devlin, members of the Committee. Thank you so much for coming out on a winter day. My name is Michael Piscitelli. I'm serving as the interim Economic Development Administrator for the city of New Haven, and we appreciate the opportunity. I'll be providing testimony on behalf of Mayor Toni Harp and the city concerning Raised Bill 7143, AN ACT CONCERNING THE LENGTH OF THE RUNWAY AT TWEED-NEW HAVEN AIRPORT. As you see behind me, we have any number of major employers' institutions, start-ups, economic development agencies here today, and they'll amplify this
testimony. Allow me just to start it off with some observations in support of Tweed's economic development infrastructure and air service development goals.

First, as many of you many know, air travel from Southern Connecticut is both time-intensive and inconvenient. Over 60 percent of the air travelers in our market area actually use Kennedy or LaGuardia Airport. This is a remarkable missed opportunity for Connecticut. These are passengers that are not using Bradley, which is more oriented to the Hartford-Springfield market. And I would add that this is an opportunity that we miss to welcome visitors to Connecticut in Connecticut. It's a very important part of why we believe Tweed as a "southern tier" complement to Bradley is very important and very important this session.

Second, from a fiscal perspective, more robust air service development will generate revenue to support the operational needs of the Airport Authority. Since 2014, city of New Haven taxpayers have invested over $5 million dollars to support the operations and capital improvements at Tweed. The state makes parallel to an even larger investments on the operations side. That has allowed Tweed to maintain its FAA certificate and a very successful service that American Airlines flies now to both Philadelphia and new service to Charlotte, North Carolina. However, now with our Grand List well over 50 percent tax-exempt, we are facing increasing pressures to support a regional asset, and I imagine you would as well at the state level on airport revenue generated from commercial air service will help that along considerably.
Given Tweed's location in the East Shore, the city continues to support and invest in projects that mitigate the impacts of a commercial airport in the neighborhood. Recent and successful projects include traffic calming measures; noise mitigation, which at full implementation will soundproof over 180 homes in the Morris Creek area; and tide gate improvements which have dramatically improved, reduced flooding and the incidents of street level flooding in the neighborhood as well.

To underscore the importance of Tweed, I think it's also important to remind and talk a little bit more about the economic significance of Greater New Haven to the state's economy. We have been at the forefront of growth in recent years, with over $1.2 billion invested in the innovation economy. New Haven has a global presence in many of the very important sectors for our state, including higher education, health care, the life science, and other innovation-based technologies. Behind the names and behind the companies, there is a community of high-skill and mission-driven professionals who travel around the world to collaborate with their peers. This is an opportunity to support them with viable air service by upgrading the airfield in a timely fashion and in a manner that is very much respectful of Tweed's neighbors. And we would ask for your support. Thank you very much.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Piscitelli, for your testimony. Are there any questions at this time? Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your testimony today. Can you just give me a little bit of history? I just
recall I think it was in the 80s, potentially, that Tweed was a more viable airport at that time, and looking to travel to Connecticut, you know, that would be in the mix of airports that you'd consider. So what happened between then and now, where there's quite fewer options to travel in and out of Tweed?

MICHAEL PISCITELLI:  I'll give you a top-level summary, and others might be able to amplify that as well. We peaked in air service in terms of number of enplanements, about 140 thousand enplanements out of Tweed. People remember a very successful service that United flew to Chicago. Any number of factors impacted Tweed's ability to grow, not least is the length of the main runway, which is limited at 5,600 linear feet. Many airlines, particularly through the consolidations that happened and after the recession, were flying different types of aircraft and were looking to fly and have flexibility to go to different cities. And, while back in the 80s, you might have had a number of regional services like Eastern or Pilgrim or something like that, coming out of the recession, you had quite a few consolidations. So a prospect like Continental, which was very encouraging for our market, flew to the cities we would want to go to, merged with United, and that basically reduced that opportunity. And as I think you see with Bradley and many other places, the lower-cost airlines fly larger regional jets, and right now, we're just pushing the envelope with regional jet service to Charlotte.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So this kind of expansion would enable larger aircraft to access the Tweed Airport?
MICHAEL PISCITELLI: So I would clarify that a little bit. Not as much as an expansion. Working within the infrastructure, within the fence lines of the airfield itself by extending the runway, it provides better levels of service and confidence to fill the aircraft with larger loads, even on the regional jets that, say, American uses today, and that reliability of service will give market confidence for other carriers to join our market.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. I'm not familiar with the Tweed footprint, but is that expansion on land or in the water?

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: It's on land owned by the city of New Haven and leased to the Tweed-New Haven Airport Authority.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. And similar changes I think at Westchester not too long ago? Because I think it was in the same sort of situation. Right? I don’t know all the dynamics around it, but that -- So living in Fairfield, that is a viable option to me, and if I don’t wanna have to deal with a big airport, that's where I'm gonna go if they have flights. But there were some changes fairly recently, I think, that did enable bigger aircraft. And whether that was accommodations with local neighbors or if it had to do with extending their runway, I'm not exactly sure. But that certainly has become a very vibrant airport. That is what you're seeking to accomplish?

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: I think it's not conceivable necessarily that we would achieve the levels of service that you see at Westchester. New Haven and Tweed is a small hub airport, if you will. We have six flights now. Bradley does, I believe, something
in the neighborhood of 60 to 70 flights per day. The New York area airports, you know, LaGuardia, Kennedy, and that sort of stuff is in the thousands of flights per day. So it's a much smaller scale that we're talking about, but it allows us to pop to the hub cities, which would allow Tweed and the air travelers in our region to get where they need to go.


MICHAEL PISCITELLI: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative Zawistowski.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the current runway length, what is the largest size aircraft that Tweed can accommodate?

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: So I will let the Tweed Airport Authority answer more of the technical questions today. But it has a lot to do with on the commercial enplanements, we now have regional jet service that can fly a certain distance. Right? So we can go to Philadelphia, we can go to Charlotte. We likely can't go to Chicago or we can't go to Florida. So it's a distance factor as well. But we've had very significant aircraft, including aircraft supporting the Vice President and the President at times that comes in through Tweed. But it's a matter of supporting the operation to the service standard of that carrier.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay. So it's as much the facility as it is the runway length?

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: Yeah. And some of our technical professionals are here today and can answer that for you.
REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay. Thank you very much.

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Are there any other questions? Representative Reyes.

REP. REYES (75TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, sir. I have a lot of friends and family members that live in the East Haven area and I remember this conversation coming up several times before. It was not a popular decision at that time, but a conversation. Is the city of East Haven more apropos now to take this on?

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: So I would let the town of East Haven speak for themselves. I will tell you it's personal for me as well. My grandparents -- And I was born right by the airport myself, so I understand that there are impacts associated with being by a commercial airfield. As part of this process, we have pitched and have implemented a number of benefits to the community to ease the impact of the airport. I think one thing that's happened over time, as mentioned earlier, Tweed has had a history of robust air service, and the movement, the overall number of movements at Tweed is still 25 to 30 thousand. Even if we triple the number of commercial, you know, flights per day, if you will, it's still a fraction of the overall activity level at Tweed.

REP. REYES (75TH): Thank you for that. And as far as the values of the property and the homes around the airport, will this affect it in any way, or even enhance it?
MICHAEL PISCITELLI: So I think that's, you know, it's speculative in nature in some ways. Some people will value being close to an airport. Others will look at the other assets of the neighborhood, you know, being in the cove, the beach, other things. As a general point, New Haven has fairly robust property values, particularly as we grew through the recession and we continue to grow. Tweed is not the only, you know, impact, transportation-related impact in the community. We have residents who live by the railyard, or by the highway, the Q-Bridge. So it's not necessarily indistinguishable from some of the other impacts you see in town, and property values have held.

REP. REYES (75TH): Well, I thank you for the answers. And I've used the Tweed Airport to travel quite a bit, and it's been convenient to get to Philadelphia, and I'm aware now that they're going to Charlotte. Would Chicago be something that's on the short horizon?

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: So, Chicago, we believe, is dependent on a longer runway. One of the real aspects of today's ask of the legislature is to extend the length of the main runway so that Chicago is a more obtainable goal.

REP. REYES (75TH): And when we say "extend it," by how many more feet are we looking for?

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: So we've got a technical team here today that can talk a little bit more about that, but at 66 hundred linear feet, it certainly becomes achievable to get to Chicago.

REP. REYES (75TH): Well, I thank you very much for your testimony, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
MICHAEL PISCITELLI: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Piscitelli, for your testimony here today. And just a few quick questions, if you don't mind. Not to be too local New Haven on this one, but as we know, it's a pretty controversial issue, specifically for the direct neighborhood surrounding the airport. I think broadly folks around New Haven see this as a net positive, but understandably, there is a very local neighborhood concern. Can you highlight some of the conversations that the city has had with the direct neighbors about potential either community benefits agreements and/or investments that the city would be willing to make to help this function more logically for that surrounding community who's concerned chiefly with increased traffic on local residential streets that surround the neighborhood, and specifically about the type of noise that they're seeing and type of air traffic that they might experience with the commercial jets versus what currently exists with the private jets outside?

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: So, thank you. It's a very important question for those members of the Committee that may not be as familiar with this. The year 2015, the city, together with our community partners launched the effort to extend the main runway, and we initiated a series of conversations in the community. Any number of press stories were written about that, and there was quite a bit of anxiety, particularly in the Morris Cove section of the city about what growth meant and how that would affect quality of life and property values. I would categorize our efforts in this regard and the commitments of the city in three main areas.
The first is in terms of traffic calming. Tweed is located off Townsend Avenue, so the local streets are sometimes impacted by traffic to the airport, and we've pitched a number of different traffic-calming measures to assist with neighbors who might have to deal with traffic at a peak point when commercial aircraft is getting ready to take off or land.

Second, and I think the most successful thing that the Tweed Airport Authority has undertaken and the state and the city have supported, is the noise mitigation program and soundproofing many homes. So it's a phased program. When fully complete, over 180 homes will be fully attenuated from the sound of the commercial aircraft in the neighborhood.

And then the third area, which I think is -- We haven't talked about it enough, but we should, is the tide gates as part of the drainage improvements at Morris Creek. Those are maintained by the Tweed-New Haven Airport Authority, and both with the experiences of sea level rise and the general run of drainage issues -- It's a very low-lying area, so you've got homes two, four, six feet above sea level in this area. The work that Tweed has done to maintain those tide gates and the efforts that our city engineer is looking into to further improved storm water management in the neighborhood just to reduce the incidents of flooding -- Folks may be familiar, the city's achieved community rating system level seven, which is the FEMA guidance, which supports reduction in flood, the insurance premium that people pay, and the flood zones here in the city, that translates to about a 14-percent decrease in flood insurance premium for New Haven residents in this neighborhood.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. And one more point of clarification. We are here having this conversation largely as a result of a codified MOU that was reached in 2009 and which led to the state legislation limiting the size of the runway length. The current proposal would seek to pave the current runway safety areas? Is that correct? And does it go beyond the current safety area --

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: It's a combination of paving the runway safety areas with some improvements to the taxiways to allow all the planes to move in and around the airfield. And there's a plan for that that's articulated in the FAA master plan for Tweed.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you very much.

MICHAEL PISCITELLI: Great. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Next up, Garrett Sheehan, followed by John Piccard, then Ginny Kozlowski. And if you guys wanna consolidate remarks and move up, you're more than welcome to do that.

GARRETT SHEEHAN: Good afternoon. Representative Lemar, Representative Devlin, and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Garrett Sheehan. I'm the President and CEO of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce and I'm here to take the opportunity to testify in support of HB 7143, AN ACT CONCERNING THE LENGTH OF RUNWAY 2-20 AT TWEED-NEW HAVEN AIRPORT.

I represent nearly 1,400 businesses with the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce and Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce, and I speak with them regularly about how they can grow, you know, our region. From many of them, an enhanced airport is important to not
only retaining the jobs that they have, but continuing to grow. Our entire membership is behind this effort, but I also would like to recognize some of the larger employers who wanted to specifically say that they supported this effort, including Avangrid, Alexion, ASSA ABLOY, District New Haven, the New Haven Manufacturing Association, Technolutions, and Ulbrich Stainless Steels & Special Metals. This is just a sampling of the organizations that want a better Tweed, and as you can see, this issue cuts across industry, size, and our entire region.

A few comments I'd like to just make about the business community. Business today is more mobile. We have more employees who work remotely, but when they need to get to an office, they really need an opportunity and a way to get there. That's why Tweed's important. When I speak with our biotech companies, it's about bringing in a top scientist from somewhere else in the world. Our manufacturers frequently are doing smaller batches of their product and they're working on prototypes, so it's bringing their customer in to see the product that we're working on. It's also very important for economic development overall. In this state, we speak a lot about location, location between Boston and New York. But it's only effective if you can get here. Finally, I think this is one of the easier levers that the legislature has to pull for economic development, especially in a constrained budget environment.

I'll close by saying the Chamber and its membership are committed to economic growth in our region, more flights and destinations, increased accessibility to New Haven and the region. With more ways to get in
and out, our businesses gain access to markets, talent, innovation, and productivity increases. I strongly urge the Committee to support this bill and support economic growth in the Greater New Haven region. If anyone has any questions.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Sheehan, for your testimony today. Are there any questions? See none. Thank you for coming out today. John Piccard, followed by Ginny Kozlowski.

JOHN PICCARD: Thank you, Chairman Lemar, members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak here this afternoon on behalf of House Bill 743.

Obviously, it's about Tweed and the expansion of the runway, and what we're asking for is to allow you, to allow us to pave the land that we already own, to allow us to pave the land that's within our fence line and that's already gravel. We're asking for that permission to help retain the companies we have here in New Haven County in Connecticut and help grow revenue. And for a state that is badly in need of revenue growth, I agree with the previous speaker; this is one of the easier decisions to make. And I understand the most difficult thing for a legislative body of elected officials to do is to cut something out of a budget. And what we're saying is if you allow us to pave our own land and expand our runway, the state offers revenue, gives revenue to Tweed, we're gonna say in a fee area you can reduce that revenue. The city of New Haven also subsidizes Tweed. We're here saying we can save you money and you can reduce that subsidy if you'll allow us to pave the runway, if you'll allow us to grow and retain jobs.
Alexion, GE, and now with just Achillion has left in large part, and one of the main reasons they said was because of air service. Now, I don't know about you, but I don't like losing companies. And I especially don't like losing them to Boston or to New York or to Philadelphia when they mention air service as one of their top concerns. This is something that we can do together. This is something that will allow Tweed to grow. This will create more jobs and more economic benefit for the entire region and for the state. And, is this going to make everybody happy? No. But it's gonna do a lot of good for a lot of people. And I know the secret to failure is trying to please everyone. So, Mr. Chairman, I know there's a lot of speakers. I'm just trying to be brief, but I'm here to answer any questions I can. I don't know how technical I can be, but I volunteer on the Board. I've chaired the Board for the last three years. But I'll do anything I can to help.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Piccard. Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you speak just a little bit more about the economic development potential?

JOHN PICCARD: I mean, Mike Piscitelli read you the numbers there in --

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Yeah.

JOHN PICCARD: -- in the [inaudible 01:42:19] we have, but we've had a number of companies, and I can give you some start-ups that I can give you their names. One, off the top of my head, is Vlad Coric Biohaven who started actually in their garage in
Madison and now have about 30 or 40 employees in New Haven and mentioned air service as one of the problems who if he has not already, will submit written testimony. So I think the general economic benefit in terms of the jobs that are created with -- The more flights that we have at Tweed, there'll be more jobs at Tweed also. But also the more businesses that would stay and actually help us attract other businesses.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. A few quick points for clarification for you, hope you could provide the Committee. The MOU which governs the current runway length had three components if I remembering correctly. Can you highlight what those three components are?

JOHN PICCARD: And again, I'll do my best, and I know there are other ones who are with more expertise, but basically it was the runway length, there was a component between the New Haven and then East Haven. So I, basically I'm focused on the runway length. I don't have the other two components.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): As far as you're aware, is Tweed-New Haven Airport in compliance with the other two facets of that MOU?

JOHN PICCARD: Yes.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): And so it'd just be this one component that you would need relief from in order to --
JOHN PICCARD: That's what we're asking release from, correct.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Okay. Thank you. Seeing none?

JOHN PICCARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Ginny Kozlowski, followed by Vin Petrini.

GINNY KOZLOWSKI: Good morning, Chairman Lemar and Co-Chairman Leone and Representative Devlin. My name is Ginny Kozlowski. I'm the Executive Director of REX Development, which is the regional economic development organization that serves South Central Connecticut. I've submitted written testimony today, but I just wanted to call out a few facts for the Committee to understand why lengthening the airport runway is very important.

Currently, we have 13 hotels under development in South Central Connecticut at various stages. A month ago, we opened a new hotel called the Blake Hotel in downtown New Haven. We have two more hotels coming in to New Haven. And if these owners and investors have made the commitment to build these hotels in our region, having great air service will also help support them as they continue to grow and grow our economy for the entire region. Many of these hotels are independent. The Blake Hotel is a boutique hotel who starts out at a rate of $327 dollars a night. So the market is strong for visitors, both business and leisure. Having a good airport with good service will continue to help see the region grow and attract more businesses outside of the hospitality area. So I want to thank you for your time and happy to answer any questions.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions? Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your testimony. I didn't realize that there was that number of projects underway.

GINNY KOZLOWSKI: Yes.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): I was recently in Nashville, and they joked that the state bird of Tennessee is the crane, because there is so much development that is happening within that city. And while there definitely is some short-term inconvenience with it, it is just a booming economy. So thank you for sharing that --

GINNY KOZLOWSKI: Thank you.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): -- and hope we can make some strides to see the same kind of activity in our state.

GINNY KOZLOWSKI: Thank you.


VIN PETRINI: Thank you, Chairman Lemar. Thank you, Ranking Member Devlin and members of the Committee. My name is Vin Petrini. I am the senior vice president and I'm the chief policy and communications officer for Yale New Haven Health. I'm here to support House Bill 7143 on the Tweed runway expansion.

By way of background, Yale New Haven Health is now the largest employer, private employer, in the state of Connecticut. We have 25,000 employees across the state. Our employees live in nearly every single
town, city, and legislative district in the state of Connecticut. We're also the largest taxpayer, now having paid more than $300 million dollars in provider taxes last year alone. But most importantly, we firmly believe that our ability to grow and to invest in this state and provide access to high quality care to some of the most vulnerable patients that we serve is highly dependent and intricately tied to the state of the economic future of the state of Connecticut, as well.

The challenges embedded in driving sustained economic investment and growth are numerous and they can be daunting, and I don’t pretend to be an economist here or an expert. But, today, I think we have the opportunity to explore one of the most direct avenues to creating jobs and revitalizing the state’s economic future. We can and we should extend the runway at Tweed Airport.

Research clearly demonstrates that the vast majority of those who reside in the Tweed catchment area are currently flying out of New York area airports like JFK, and Newark, and LaGuardia, and White Plains. I think anyone who has recently tried to access any of those airports has found that the amount of lost time and productivity traveling two hours or plus, on a good day, to a place like LaGuardia and facing massive constructive delays when they get there, they're real and they're detrimental to our economic growth in the state of Connecticut. It’s not surprising that companies who wish to stay or locate in Connecticut cite access to a nearby airport as critical.

Today, Tweed represents the second largest underserved market in the region. There is real and
immediate benefit from expanding the runway, and we do not need to move beyond the existing boundaries.

One other point I'd like to make today for anyone that may have read the New London Day yesterday, there was a story about a heart transplant patient whose life was saved at Yale New Haven Hospital. He's a former judicial marshal in New London. We did 30 such heart transplants last year alone, which was a record number. I'm doing more than 40 this year. Those hearts, those organ donations, come to us via Tweed-New Haven Airport. Commercial service at Tweed is critical to the viable future of that airport. That airport's future is critical to our ability to continue to provide that level of access of care to the patients that we serve.

We believe in the future of New Haven and we believe in the future of Connecticut. The approval of this bill takes us in precisely the right direction from our perspective. So it's with enormous respect that I ask this Committee’s support of this critical bill to address what I think is a key lynchpin in the economic future of the state of Connecticut. I'd be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Petrini, for your testimony. Are there any questions? Seeing none. Thank you again for coming up today. Rich Jacob, followed by Dawn Hocevar.

RICH JACOB: Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, Representative Devlin, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to comment on HB 7143. I am Rich Jacob, Associate Vice President for Federal and State Relations at Yale University. I am also a member of the Tweed Airport
Authority board and I am testifying on behalf Yale, which enthusiastically supports HB 7143.

I'm pretty deep in the lineup. I'm almost bad in clean-up, so I will cut it really short and just add a couple points. First, I think, Representative Devlin, you had asked about economic development and why, and I think part of that reflects the fact that as others have noted, we're spending, from the Tweed market, we're spending 63 percent of our travel money in New York airports, not in New Haven, that have a big effect. I, in my work, I've attended conferences at Duke, Notre Dame, Brown, Penn, all sorts of universities. I've never hosted one in my own campus, because my colleagues say we can't get to New Haven. As Ginny said, we are building new hotels. We want to fill those hotels. I think that's another big factor.

Tweed has estimated that if we add modest service, even just to Chicago and to Washington D.C., it will add $100 million dollars annually to the economy -- I'm sorry, it'll add 1,000 jobs and about $120 million dollars annually to the economy, plus addition to the tax coffers in the city of New Haven.

And the other effect that I'd really like to mention is we've observed, this Commission on Fiscal Stability observed that we're retaining only 33 percent of our college graduates in Connecticut. We send a wrong signal to our college graduates when we don't even have a functioning airport in the New Haven area and we're telling them we're not really serious about competing head-to-head with Boston and New York and other major centers of innovation that have viable air service. To us, that's an important
reason for proceeding with HB 7143. I'll stop there and take any questions you may have.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Jacob, for your testimony. Are there any questions? Seeing none. Hold on. [laughing] I'm sorry to move so quickly.

RICH JACOB: I just want to thank you -- [laughing] I just want to thank you, whether it's Tweed or Metro North or New Haven Line, you and Yale University have been quick to offer up resources and help in trying to think thoughtfully about the role that transportation and infrastructure investments can plan in Connecticut's future, so I do appreciate your role in that.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): And we appreciate your leadership. Thank you. Seeing none off the hook? Dawn, followed by Anthony Farfaria.

DAWN HOCEVAR: Hello, Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, Senator Devlin, and Senator Martin. I am here to testify regarding HB 7143, the extension of Tweed Airport, and I represent the bioscience industry in Connecticut. I, personally, I am president and CEO of BioCT. BioCT is the industry voice for this industry in the state of Connecticut.

I meet with members every day, including Yale, and we are looking to really grow this bioscience industry in Connecticut. The legislature passed a bill last year, and Malloy had signed it. We put a ten-year strategic plan together in growing this industry here. And one of the critical things that in looking at what do we need to do and enhance, one of the main issues is transportation.
So for the New Haven area, as Rich and others pointed out, there is a plethora of new start-up companies that come out of Yale that are growing in between New Haven and Branford area, and there are success stories such as Arvinas. But the key thing that these companies need is investment. They need funding in order to create their companies. A lot of investors look at Connecticut and they need to come and meet with their CEOs and their executive teams. But to come to New Haven, it's painful. As others have mentioned, they have to fly into New York, or they fly into Boston, even going to Hartford and then turning around and having to drive down to New Haven, it's just time-consuming. It's 2019 in this century. But the digital world, et cetera, in New Haven, Connecticut, should be on the cutting edge as well. And, as others have pointed out, this isn't gonna cost the state money to open up this venue for companies to grow and stay here and be prosperous. Thank you. Any questions?

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you for your testimony and for coming up today. Are there any questions? Seeing none. Thanks to you again for braving the weather. I appreciate it.

DAWN HOCEVAR: You're very welcome. [laughing] No problem.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Anthony Farfaria, followed by Kevin Rocco.

ANTHONY FARTARIA: Mr. Chairman, good morning. Good morning, Committee. More about on the ground employee representing the largest hotel in New Haven. I wanted to be a voice along with the others behind me and past speakers that I feel my testimony can pretty much fall under that, and I personally
think that it's a common-sense item to expand the runway. Even though there is, of course, some concern with the neighboring community, I think the benefits and the pros outweigh the cons. And that's it.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Anthony, for coming up today. Are there any questions for Anthony? Anthony Farfaria, am I getting that right?

ANTHONY FARTARIA: Close, Fartaria.


KEVIN ROCCO: Thank you, Representative Lemar, Senator Leone, and members of the Transportation Committee. I am here in strong support of HB 7143, and my name is Kevin Rocco and I'm the CEO of Biorez.

Biorez is a medical device company developing regenerative implants for orthopedic surgery. Our technology has the potential to improve outcomes for serious musculoskeletal injuries, and we are the first company in the world to conduct a clinical trial with a regenerative implant for ACL reconstruction. Biorez is located in New Haven, and we are part of the growing biotech sector that can help drive the future of Connecticut’s economy with a skilled workforce and high-paying jobs. New Haven is an excellent home for a biotech company because there is a great talent pool, world-class universities, and most importantly, a vibrant city where people are excited to work and live. With Yale New Haven Health as the state’s largest employer, it is clear Connecticut’s future is in
health care, medical devices, and biotech. However, for companies like Biorez to grow in Connecticut, local access to airports is critical. For example, we do our preclinical research in Australia, clinical trials in Europe, and we collaborate with a variety of surgeons and scientists throughout the country. All in, this takes a lot of flights by employees, consultants, surgeons, and investors; and rarely can we get flights to and from New Haven.

Data shows that over 50 percent of Greater New Haven travelers leave the state to catch a flight, despite Tweed being the closest option and despite Bradley being an excellent airport. All of this can be addressed with the support and passage of HB 7143. There is also data that suggests the lack of an adequate airport in Southern Connecticut drove businesses out of New Haven and out of Connecticut. Many other smaller companies, many of which were incubated with ties to Yale, have also left. They did not make any headlines when they left, but some of them will grow into larger companies, and they will do so outside of Connecticut.

An expanded runway at Tweed will increase connectivity by an order of magnitude, even by only adding one or two destinations or expanding air service by five to ten percent. This increased connectivity will lead to more companies staying and growing in Southern Connecticut. The estimated impact to the region’s economy, from conservative estimates of $32 million to well over $100 million, and will likely continue to grow as companies relocate into Connecticut, not just stopping companies from leaving.
I know expanding the airport will help Biorez grow, and I know there are many other companies in a similar position. I'm here to represent all. I know there are some costs to expand the airport that should be addressed, such as increases in traffic, noise, and pollution; but these costs are relatively small and the impact for the greater good is quite large. I encourage you to support this bill, ensure its passage, and allow Tweed to expand as is needed to support and grow our economy. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Kevin. It was great seeing you last fall. I think we talked for while.

KEVIN ROCCO: Yes.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): And it's great seeing you up here today representing both your business, but broadly the business climate in New Haven.

KEVIN ROCCO: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): I do appreciate you coming up today. Are there any questions for Kevin? Thank you, again, so much for coming up today.

KEVIN ROCCO: Thanks.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Michael Rady, followed by Matt Hoey.

MICHAEL RADY: Hello, Chairman Lemar, Chairman Leone, Representative Devlin. I'm Michael Rady and I'm here to speak in support of HB 7143. I am an educator and a resident of New Haven.

And firstly, I'm here to share with you a petition that over 80 New Haven area residents have signed in support of this bill. I submitted it earlier, and it's also electronic. These are people who are
teachers, small business owners, elected officials, students, retirees, and more. And I wanna echo the people that spoke before me about the positive economic impacts that a longer runway at Tweed and more flights at Tweed would have for our region.

But the reason why I wanted to talk with you is what this bill would mean for families. I used to be a third-grade teacher in Newark, New Jersey, and one night after I was teaching, I was organizing my classroom and I got a call saying that my mom had gotten in a terrible car accident and was being rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. And she was in Maine, and we didn't have any other family members in Maine at the time. And so I knew I needed to go. And so I was able to get in my car and be at Newark Airport in ten minutes. I was able to catch a flight that night so that I was able to be there in the hospital with her that night and she wouldn't be alone. My mom, thankfully, got better, and now she lives in Florida with my dad, and I live in New Haven. I love it. But something that really gets me worried is whether I'd be able to be there for them in a similar situation. Right now, it would take me two to three hours to get to JFK or LaGuardia. And if there happened to be a flight from Bradley, it would take me over an hour to get there to catch a flight. This bill, expanding the runway at Tweed and getting more flights there, would increase the chances that I would be able to be there for them if they needed me urgently. And I promise that I'm not the only person in the New Haven region that has family that's in Florida or somewhere else warm.

And right now, the New Haven region is an air travel desert. It's really hard for us to get to fly
somewhere urgently. And so I ask you, please, when you're considering your vote on this legislation, think about your family, your loved ones, and how important it is to you to be there for them when they need you urgently. Please vote for 7143. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Michael, very much for your testimony and for gathering names on a petition. Please submit those names to our clerk and we have some procedures that will be included as public testimony on whether or not that counts as public testimony, probably not, but it's good to have as a reference point, community input. So I appreciate that.

MICHAEL RADY: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Senator Leone.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon. You mentioned all the petitions, which is a great thing. But is that in the surrounding area or in the Greater New Haven? What neighborhoods are those petitions from?

MICHAEL RADY: So most of our respondents are residents of New Haven, but we also have people who have responded from like North Haven, Meriden, Hamden, Shelton, Milford, around the area.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Are there any other questions for Michael? Seeing none. Thank you so much for coming up today.

MICHAEL RADY: Thank you.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): Matt Hoey. Matt, if I've butchered your name, I deeply apologize and I hope you --

MATT HOEY: That's all right. My whole family pronounces it different ways, so it doesn't really matter. Good afternoon, Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, and Ranking Member Devlin, and the panel to the members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today regarding HB 7143, AN ACT CONCERNING THE LENGTH OF RUNWAY 2-20 AT TWEED-NEW HAVEN AIRPORT.

I am Matt Hoey, and since December 2017, I've had the honor of serving as a First Selectman of the town Guilford. It's a wonderful community, yet it's very much dependent on the Greater New Haven region for a variety of services, employment, and cultural offerings. In full disclosure, I have also served as a South Central Regional Council of Government representative on the Tweed-New Haven Airport Authority Board of Directors since the fall of 2015. More recently, I was appointed as the Interim Executive Director of the Airport Authority, temporarily filling the void created when one of your colleagues, Senator Tim Larson, stepped down to take a position in the Lamont Administration. You will be or have been presented with testimony today that stresses the importance of a vibrant airport, offering reliable and cost-effective services for businesses and personal travel beyond what is available today from Tweed-New Haven Airport as a result of the current restriction on runway 2-20.

As to the importance of a viable airport, just last week, there was a report that Achillion Pharmaceuticals, a longstanding New Haven biotech
firm, announced that they were relocating to Philadelphia and cited access to major airports as one of their primary reasons for relocating. Would a more vibrant Tweed-New Haven Airport prevent others from following suit? I have not attended an Economic Development Committee or Shore Line Chamber of Commerce event over the last year plus where I haven't had at least one conversation with a business owner who was dismayed by the limited air travel options into and out of Tweed-New Haven.

I would like to clear up a common misconception. With the passage of this bill, Tweed-New Haven is not expanding the airport's footprint. We are not proposing to extend the runway. The proposal is to pave the existing runway safety areas to accommodate the newer aircraft being used by most carriers. The Authority has diligently courted other carriers and has consistently heard that there is great interest in this underserved market, but that interest is conditioned on the resolution of the runway issue.

As you are no doubt aware, we have recently entered into discussions with the Connecticut Airport Authority to discuss potential benefits from consolidation with CAA. It is interesting to note that CAA's stated goal is "to make CAA's airports more attractive to new routes, new commerce, and new companies who maybe considering making Connecticut their home." We'd like to add making Greater New Haven their home to that goal.

Rightfully so, there has been a focus on community benefits for those who live in the area around the airport. We feel that we have been a good neighbor, consistently inviting the community to partake in our board meetings and we welcome working with the
community to ensure the airport can most appropriately serve their needs. Of particular note is the Community Noise Mitigation Initiative, which provides area homeowners with comprehensive residential sound installations and improvements. Approximately $9 million dollars has been spent or authorized to spend to complete work on 131 homes. The final phase of this project will add an additional 58 homes at $3.6 million dollars for a total of 189 homes and over $12.6 million dollars. While most of these funds come from federal government, the state of Connecticut will have supplemented this initiative with over $700,000 dollars and the local governmental share being in excess of $540,000. Tweed-New Haven Airport is prepared to work to continue with the area residents, municipalities, and state legislators to identify any other potential community benefits that might be appropriate. Thank you very much for your consideration of my opinion.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. Senator Leone, followed by Representative Altobello.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon, Mr. Hoey.

MATT HOEY: Good afternoon.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): And congratulations on your acting role.

MATT HOEY: Thank you.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): Maybe it'll turn in to a fulltime, we'll see.
MATT HOEY: No. [laughing] This is an interim role Senator. And it's -- By the way, my town charter prohibits my receiving any compensation for same.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): I gotcha. It sounds like your plate is full already. And you may or may not have some information on the question I wanted to ask, so, and that's okay if you don't. But if the airport were to expand, being you're on the Board, how many different routes do you think could open up and how quick would it take to ramp up to bring in new lines, new airlines, and do you have anyone waiting in the wings that if we did this, they would gladly start talks with us?

MATT HOEY: Thank you, Senator. Yes, we already have a commitment Memorandum of Understanding with Allegiant Airlines who, once we have an extended runway, will start providing flights. I don't have the particular routes on that, but I also do know that we have had -- I referenced some discussions we've had with other carriers. And among them are United, Delta, expanded American presence, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit Airlines, Southern Airways, and Frontier Airways. As to those routes, I can't comment specifically. But I do know that it opens up routes outside of our very limited capacity today down to many destinations in the South.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): Sounds as if it's quite a few on the docket, which is actually a good thing. Is there any way to ballpark the number of jobs that would come with any one or two of those airlines, or per airline, how many jobs you roughly think that could be?

MATT HOEY: Senator, I don't have that at my command at this point. I'd be guessing at this point.
SEN. LEONE (27TH): Okay. I would think it'd be increase of --

MATT HOEY: It would be significant. And there are -- We do have some studies, and I'm sure there are others who have access to that information. I don't have it at my command today.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): Maybe at a later point, if you or your team is able to provide some of that for us, that would help as we try to move this along. Because then that'll be part of the debate to maybe add weight to moving forward.

MATT HOEY: We'd be delighted to provide that. We do have some documentation that talks to the economic impact of the expansion of the airport. Again, my apology for not having it at my command.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): No, no, that's quite all right. Sometimes we move faster than we are able to get information. But I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative Altobello.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon.

MATT HOEY: Good afternoon.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): We've heard testimony in a combined way that indicates that you're not looking to increase the footprint of the existing airport and that the extension of the tarmac would be laid over existing gravel. Is that correct?

MATT HOEY: Correct, and grass, I understand.
REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): And grass. I'm looking at it now. It looks like you have about 2,000 feet.

MATT HOEY: Mm-hmm.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): Of extra room there. How many feet would you extend that and how much would be to the north of the 2-20 and how much to the south?

MATT HOEY: So the extension would be, to my understanding, 600 feet. I don't have the breakdown on the north and south at this point.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): So it'd be 6,000 feet in total?

MATT HOEY: Six hundred feet.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): Thank you. You did say that and it just didn't click! I, for some reason, multiplied it times ten. So in your master plan, how many more parking spaces, and buildings, and support would you need on your existing footprint to -- I know it would -- To maximize, let's say, the airport just for the sake of conversation?

MATT HOEY: Unfortunately, today we have plenty of capacity in those parking lots, and it is not anticipated at this point that we would need to increase until such time as we are able to assess the impact of the runway expansion and actually know how many flights we can get into that facility.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): Having not enough parking would be a problem --

MATT HOEY: That'd be a wonderful problem to have.
REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): A wonderful problem in the future. All right. Well, thank you very much, sir, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MATT HOEY: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. I have a few questions, if you don't mind.

MATT HOEY: Certainly.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): As you know, and we are being both the designee from the South Central Regional Council of Governments and in your current acting capacity as Interim Executive Director, there is a vocal and well-developed resistance to this airport paving area being extended to the full 6,000 feet by the surrounding neighborhood who feels that the MOU was a codification of a well understood agreement between East Haven, New Haven, and the Airport Authority, and the local neighborhood.

MATT HOEY: Correct.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): It had at that point in time been signed off by both senators, both the state representatives, mayors of each town. So the concern is, Tweed wants this now. What are they gonna want in the future? If we allow them unlimited expansion capacity, what's to stop them at 6,000 feet, and I think Representative Altobello's questions kind of lead in that natural direction. Like what is the long-term plan for Tweed if it's beyond what you're asking for today. And I think that's what the neighborhood's expecting greater clarification on as we move forward. The opposition isn't, you know, just a bunch of Nimby's who don't want this in their backyard. They're coming with
really well-developed arguments about what they see as their rightful concerns, and if we, I hope we could speak to that reality a little more in depth, if you could.

MATT HOEY: At this point, we are in the early stages of going out for reworking of our master plan. And at this point, that master plan would obviously entail some form of expansion based on market opportunities created by the additional runway length. As to the neighbors, I wholly understand their concerns, and they would like to see some kind of plan relative to or impact. At this point, we cannot specifically say what those impacts are, unless you use a multiple variety. So if we increase by three flights a day, five flights a day, et cetera, that would have a significant impact one way or the other. So we're relying on this upcoming master plan review, which we're required to do by the FAA every several years. And again, I don't have it exactly at my command how often, but I do know that we are about to engage with a consulting firm to do so.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Great. And as far as we know, the amount, the MOU that was codified in statute represented three conditions that were required of the Tweed Airport Authority, and it is your expectation that you're only asking for relief from that one variable that limits the current runway length. Is that correct?

MATT HOEY: That is my understanding.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): And so my encouragement to you and to everyone who's in favor of this is to continue to work with the city and the town of East Haven, and the local neighborhood to try to develop
to the greatest extent possible a community benefits plan and a greater agreement about what the long-term vision for Tweed is. Because I think everyone here today has done an outstanding job articulating the net positives for Tweed, and if you look at my email inbox or if you go to an event at the district in my town, I hear from business leaders, community residents, and folks from all spectrums saying, "Please, find a way to make Tweed work." So we're imploping on you to help get us there in your relationships with the surrounding communities and those towns.

MATT HOEY: Representative, we agree wholeheartedly that this is a community-wide initiative and all of the parties that you have talked to have, stakeholders, have a vested interest and we intend to address those. In particular, one note, we -- one program, community benefits program we're starting to take a look at is the potential for a noise easement program for those homes that are outside of the, those that qualified for the sound insulation program, which would be in effect to extend that boundary out for their, for benefits for those individuals, individual homeowners.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you so much for your testimony today.

MATT HOEY: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): That exhausts the public sign-up list, but we will now take people on a one-on-one basis, if there's any that want to speak.

GERALD WEINER: Representative Lemar, I apologize. I didn't think I would be here today, but I -- Something changed in my schedule. I'd like to have
a few minutes to just talk about some of the technical issues —

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Mr. Weiner, if you could say your name and affiliation for the record, please, that would be terrific.

GERALD WEINER: Gerald Weiner, and I'm Vice Chairman of the Tweed-New Haven Airport Authority. W, E, I, N, E, R. And again, I apologize for not signing up, but I didn't think I would be here. There were a couple of technical questions that I think I might have the answers and it'll take me about a minute to answer some of those questions that have been raised.

The first question I think Representative Devlin was talking is size of the airplane. It's not necessarily only the size of the airplane that limits Tweed's ability to attract new airlines. It is the inability to fill up the airplanes that we have. In other words, each airplane that takes off from Tweed, because of the runway limitations at various times due to weather and other conditions, cannot leave with a full load. So the airplanes are leaving with less than a full load, even though there are passengers willing to take those seats, which leads to a loss of profit for the airlines and they cannot financially operate with even our existing airplanes. So it's not necessarily larger planes; it's being able to take off with our existing planes with full loads. So that's one of the issues that I think were raised.

Senator, Representative Lemar indicated the MOU. There were three restrictions in the MOU: runway length, number of passengers, and enplanements. And you're correct that the only thing we're seeking
today -- the only thing that's in the statute is the runway length. So really this bill affects runway length only. We have had a study done recently that indicated that just increasing flights to Chicago and Washington D.C. could result in a thousand additional jobs plus $122 million dollars annually in economic benefits. So it really is significant, and that's why we're all trying to do the best we can to make sure we have this runway restriction limited. This is the first element in getting a runway restriction lifted. If this, if the legislature sees fit to grant the relief we're asking, there's a number of community hearings that have to take place, environmental impact studies, we'd have to have hearings before the DEEP to get permission to extend the runway. The public will have a tremendous opportunity to have input into what is happening, what the future may bring for Tweed. And this, as I said, just the beginning, and we'd hope that we're allowed to do that. So I can answer any other technical questions that you might have. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative Altobello.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon.

GERALD WEINER: Good afternoon.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): Glad you could make it.

GERALD WEINER: [laughing] I'm happy I'm here.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): So, under certain weather conditions, you're saying that even though the plane may be sold out, they can't leave, they can't take
off with a full, with all the seats full because of FAA restrictions. Is that correct, sir?

GERALD WEINER: Yes.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): And approximately -- What are we -- How large capacity-wise, passenger-wise are the planes that are currently being used, and how many people would have to be bumped?

GERALD WEINER: Well, that depends on the weather conditions. We also have some built-in restrictions at the airport, such as trees, which restrict the amount of weight that a plane can take off with. So the combination of natural restrictions plus the length of the runway plus weather conditions and any other conditions that might occur on a particular day limits the airline from complying with FAA requirements and they must bump some passengers. It could be one, could be two, could be seven, could be eight. But that could be the breaking point for an airline making a determination as to whether it can viably survive at a place like Tweed, even though the passengers are there and ready, willing, and able to use our flights. So, in answer to your question, it's hard to give you the precise answers, because there are so many factors that go into those decisions. But we do know airlines are unwilling to come to Tweed, even with existing aircraft, due to many of the penalties that they must incur as a result of the length of the runway.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): And the extra 600 feet would not necessarily be used or would it never be used? Or would it just be there because there's a FAA regulation that requires it and then you could fill up your plane, and not bump anybody?
GERALD WEINER: Well, there's -- Right. Their safety runway areas and the extra feet go into the mathematical computation as to how many passengers and -- It's not necessarily passengers; it's the weight that the airplane can take off with. So, yes, that extra amount of space definitely improves the ability of an airline to leave with a full load, which hence improves their profitability.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): And finally, if I may, of the 600 extra feet, do you know how much would be north of the 2-20 and how much would be south or --

GERALD WEINER: I understand it's gonna be, will be divided equally among the north and the south, and I don't want to be limited to the 600. I know that's a number that has come up today. I think it's in the area of 600, may be 700, it may be 800, it may be 400 or 500, but we have to get to approximately 6,000, 6,200 feet of runway length. And that's the number we'll be looking for.

REP. ALTOBELLO (82ND): I see. Well, thank you very much for clearing that up and I'm glad you made the trip. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

GERALD WEINER: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you so much for that. Are there any -- Oh, sorry. Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought Representative Altobello was going to, your exchange was gonna answer my question, but if you could just clarify, and I don't mean to be beating a dead horse, so to speak. But at one point, Tweed was far more vibrant than it was today. And when I asked why, the answer that I had had to do more with
that the reginal carriers had gone away, and
generally those were smaller planes. But we've
always had weather issues here. The runway's always
been the same length. So what is it then that is
different? Is it a change in FAA regulations? Is
there a change from a state perspective that has
driven this new pattern, if it's not the size of the
aircraft?

GERALD WEINER: That's an excellent question. I am
the oldest living member of the Airport Authority.
I was there when it first started, and I'm
embarrassed to say that, but it's true. I can
remember taking a flight a couple of times to
Chicago. My son was looking at schools in the
Chicago area. It was wonderful. I understand that
the reason why the Chicago flight was doomed was
basically because the planes were leaving with
pretty good loads, but they were not able to fill to
capacity. And that was the basic reason that they
couldn't continue on.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So that was the issue at that
point as well?

GERALD WEINER: The same issue.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay.

GERALD WEINER: There also was that we had a Delta
flight going to Cincinnati for a short period of
time, and I understand that one of the reasons why
that might, among others, but one of the reasons why
that flight didn't continue on was because of the
loads and the weight that the plane needed to have
in order to successfully meet the FAA requirements.
REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So the additional feet isn't necessarily then to accommodate a larger aircraft; it's to give that length, I guess?

GERALD WEINER: The ability to take off on a certain angle, and I have no idea of the technical stuff. [laughing] And also, I don't wanna just say that it wouldn't help to have a slightly larger plane. Of course, that would be a benefit. But it's a combination of both, the inability to have a slightly larger plane together with the inability to leave with full loads on our existing aircraft.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. Thank you for clarifying that. And just one other point in your role, have there been -- We've heard and our Chair also raised the point of maybe some locally neighbors not agreeing with this. Have there been public hearings held within the surrounding neighborhoods first? [Crosstalk]

GERALD WEINER: I don’t think we've had -- We had Tim Larson, who was our Executive Director was extremely responsive to people who made calls and had complaints, and he answered every single complaint, went out to visit people at their homes. We haven't had any recent public hearings, but we did have an extension of the, we did have an addition to the safety runway areas several years ago where we had numerous public hearings and many people attended. And that is a preview of what has to happen now if the legislature would see fit just to lift that restriction on the runway size. We have a long way to go and the public is gonna have ample opportunity to come before us and issue, and go to another body, DEEP, and it'll be DEEP's
determination as to whether we actually can go forward with paving the runway areas.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Sure. Thank you. Thank you for answering my questions and making the trip here today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Chairman Leone.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon again. Quick question. Being an Air Force guy, I understand the loads and the capacity --

GERALD WEINER: Better than I, for sure.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): Some folks may not. Can you give a ballpark? Like what's the ratio of the loads that you're not able to fill? Is it a 10 percent per plane, 20 percent. I mean, or is there a number of seats that are not being filled. I mean --

GERALD WEINER: That's a great question, and if I took a stab at it, I probably would be have an 80 percent chance of being incorrect, so I'd rather not give you that kind of an answer. Again, former Senator Tim Larson would have that at the tip of his fingers. But we can provide that information to the Committee, and I think that might be very helpful.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): Yeah, I think that's a talking point that sorta has been missed in all this over the years, because everyone just assumes it's gonna be larger aircraft with more noise and so forth. And if we're able to explain why the smaller ones aren't making a profit, which is key to the survivability of the airport, then that could, you know, maybe change the direction of the conversation. So it would be helpful.
GERALD WEINER: Great.

SEN. LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. One more, Representative Zawistowski.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you for being here today. Quick follow-up. You had mentioned that there were a lot of hearings for expansion of the safety area of the airport. Is that the area that is currently gravel and is anticipated to be part of the expansion to be paved?

GERALD WEINER: That's the unpaved safety areas which we needed to get permission from the DEEP several years ago to even have unpaved safety areas. Yes. And that's correct. Those were the hearings that were held for those, for that type of improvement, as well as we'll need additional hearings for this kind of an improvement -- to pave those very areas.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay, yeah, I kind of thought that might be. I just wanted to verify that. Thank you very much.

GERALD WEINER: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you very much for your testimony today.

GERALD WEINER: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thanks for making it up.

GERALD WEINER: If I knew I had so many questions, I would've shut up. [laughing]

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Again, that is the end of our public sign-up list at this point. We recognize
that people are having a hard time getting up in time, and we are going to extend this public hearing for anyone who wishes to testify at this point. Is there anyone who has not signed up today who would wish to testify at this moment?

As Chair, I think it's important for me to note the Committee has received testimony while we're here and in advance of this hearing from many people who had hoped to be here. I've heard from a few of them saying that the weather prohibited them from making it in time, including many members of ours. We are going to keep the public hearing testimony open for emailed comments, again at tratestimony@cga.ct.gov. For anyone who was unable to come here today, please feel free to submit testimony up until March 25th, which is this Committee's JF deadline for consideration for Committee members. And for anyone who was unable to make it who wishes to be heard, that is the most appropriate way. You do not have to drive up right now to be heard. We'll make sure that every Committee member receives any commentary from any individual who was unable to make it today. Thank you. And with that, we'll leave the hearing open until 4:00 p.m. Thank you.