REP. LAMAR (96TH): We're slowly gonna pull this together. If folks could take a seat, that would be terrific. Make sure the access ways in and out are open.

We're about to kick off our first public hearing for the Transportation Committee this year. We anticipate at least two more after today.

You'll see one agenda has already been posted for this coming Friday. We'll likely be issuing another agenda in the next couple days. So with that, I'd like to call to order today's public hearing. The bills for review have been posted on CGA and in the Clerk's office and in our Committee room. We have five bills.

We have about ten public officials who are signed up as well as 13 members of the public. So what we're
gonna do is we're reserve this first hour for the Commissioner. If we can move that along quickly, if there's information that we can acquire outside of the committee process for your information to make it easier, to move this process along, let's do that.

But that being said, after that first hour we're going to start taking members of the public in the offsetting manner. So all of that, Clerk will be ready to record.

CLERK: Perfect.

REP. LAMAR (96TH): All right, let's call Commissioner Giletti up to start the morning. Commissioner and team, we'll just need you guys to each introduce yourselves before you begin.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Good morning, Chairman Leone, Chairman Lemar, Ranking Members Martin and Devlin and members of the Transportation Committee, I'm Joseph Giulietti, Commissioner of the Department of Transportation.

MARK ROLFE: And I'm Mark Rolfe, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Transportation.

GARY EQUILIDO: Garrett Eucalitto, Deputy Commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Transportation.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: I would like to thank the Committee for raising several department proposals in Senate Bill No. 151. We have submitted written comments so I will briefly share some highlights.

Section one, the bill allows the Department with OPM's approval of program parameters to extend the
U-PASS program to private colleges, universities and other educational institutions.

Since the start of the program in August of 2017, state college and university students have made over four million passenger trips using U-PASS. The program is not only helping students to get to classes, jobs and social engagements, it is helping to develop the next generation of sustainable transportation users.

Under safety of the traveling public which is our number one priority and which is why the Department is again proposing legislation to require the use of rear seatbelts and restricting open containers in motor vehicles.

Rear seatbelts reduce fatalities and according to the National Highway Safety Administration, backseat three-point seatbelts are 54 percent effective in reducing fatalities in all crashes when compared to the unrestrained backseat occupants.

Connecticut is one of 12 states that has not enacted a Federally mandated open container law. As a result, states are penalized and required to transfer Federal dollars meant for highway construction to highway safety programs since 2001.

Connecticut DOT has already transferred over $152 million dollars because of this. An AHTFA study shows that states without open container laws experience significantly greater proportions of alcohol-involved fatal motor vehicle crashes than states with partially conforming or fully conforming laws.

A hundred and thirty two of the 294 fatalities in Connecticut were alcohol-related in 2018.
Nationally, the percentage of alcohol-related fatalities is 34 percent compared to 45 percent in Connecticut.

Section two and three of the bill will assist the Department in modernizing our current bus contracting projects. The Department is committed under 13b-34 to contract for bus services while under 13b-a private operators can operate bus routes under route specific certificates. For more than 40 years, Connecticut contracted from almost all fixed bus routes whether they were covered by certificate or not in order to subsidize the short-fallen revenue as private bus companies could no longer operate those routes at a profit.

A recent court ruling determined that each bus company which enters into a contract with the Department under 13b-34 must obtain a certificate under 13b-80. The court’s ruling would require the Department to issue certificates for each of the approximately 200 routes operated under contract for the Department.

The agency has proposed an amendment to allow the Department to continue its past practice of the last 40 years to contract for subsidized routes without the added regulatory burden of having to issue a certificate under 13b-80 for each route.

The requirement that a contractor obtain a certificate under 13b-80 which requires the contractor to demonstrate a need for the service is duplicative of the Commissioner's determination of a need for the contracted services under 13b-34.

Private carriers who possess certificates will not be affected by this proposal since they currently
operate under contract with the Department and are paid a management fee in addition to all their expenses. They are compensated based -- they are compensated based on providing the service, not on ridership.

The Department welcomes any private carrier who possesses a certificate to provide bus service for the citizens of the state with a Department subsidy. Finally, the Department is always looking for ways to create efficiencies and find better ways of conducting business internally and a number of our proposals reflect on this ongoing effort. Section seven will eliminate duplicative notification to local commissions who hold no jurisdiction over certain permits. Section five and six will improve the consultant selection process by making the consult evaluations yearly and providing an additional month for prequalification review by Connecticut DOT and section 12 will streamline the process of revoking stagnant livery permits.

I will gladly take any questions you have. Thank you.

REP. LAMAR (96TH): Thank you, Commissioner. Mark and Gary, you gonna introduce information now or are you here mostly to help assist in question and answers?

MARK ROLFE: Yes.

REP. LAMAR (96TH): Terrific. Thank you again for your testimony and joining us here today and for submitting your legislative package much earlier this year than the last year. You were just getting sworn in at the time when we were asking you to come
up with a long-term comprehensive transportation policy for the entire state.

We took it easy on you last year but I don't know, I think folks are ready to beat you up today.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: I think there's a perspective on taking it easy on someone, okay? But all right.

REP. LAMAR (96TH): Thank you. Well, this is the first time before the Committee where you haven't had to talk about tolls, so you know, welcome.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Thank you.

REP. LAMAR (96TH): So are there questions for the Commissioner at this point? I'll turn it over to Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and good morning, Commissioner, and to your team. It's a pleasure to see you here again. Seems like we were just talking last week.

But now we're looking forward to new legislation before us and not -- not just with your bill but with many other bills are relative to DOT and actually, your -- your bill sort of covers many of the topics that we've raised concepts so that various members can sorta talk about their issues one way or another. And I just wanted to maybe get your thoughts on a couple of them.

In terms of your section two and three with modernization of the public transit contracting, I know there's some people that want us to raise legislation for how the public buses use their right-of-way, their certificate that they have.
And I just wanted to get a better understanding of what that means and if you can maybe give us your point of view as to how these private bus providers -- how that works within DOT so that the Committee has a sense of what that is or is not. That'd be question one.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: And on question one, let me first come back to you with the standpoint that under Federal rules, I can never operate a system as a state that competed with the private sector.

The private sector can provide that service and make money off of it, I cannot use Federal money to go and compete against them.

What has happened here -- back when I used to ride the buses going to high school -- was at that time they were all profit-making companies. Since that time, it's all fallen into where right now the state is not only providing the buses, the maintenance for the buses or basically paying for 85 percent of the operation and including profit and overhead in it whether they have one rider or 100 riders, this is what we're doing.

So it's entered a new phase because demographics change, times have changed, okay, and these bus companies were no longer able to make profit. When -- and I wasn't here for it, but when we started up a new route, okay, there's been some companies that feel that because they used to have a route designation, because they had that route designation, they are entitled to go for that new business that's coming there.

I've got to be candid with you, for me it's biting the hand that feeds you, okay. Here we are, we're
providing not only for their operation, not only all the buses and everything else, but we're providing them a profit and overhead on it and yet if we go to establishing new service, they're in a position where they feel that it's an entitlement and that's where we've gone to the courts and the courts are now asking us, you know, you're the ones that put in the certificate requirement so follow through on the certificate requirement because it's a requirement by the legislature. It's no longer effective. Those routes are no longer effective. We've had them modified going across.

So from my end, I'm just telling you from the standpoint of being involved with this for the number of years that I have, this is the first time I've come across this type of a situation where when you're turning around and subsidizing an operation, we've got an argument right now from the private sector that they should have that subsidy in another market going forward.

So that's where I feel it falls into. Anybody else want to add on to that?

UNKNOWN: No.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Okay, leave it on me.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): And I'm sure at some point we'll hear from the other side [crosstalk].

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: I'm sure you will, yes. Yes.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): So just to capitalize on what you just said, would this -- if the proposal were to go forward, would they lose their certificate or would they still be able to provide their service?
COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: They can provide the services that they're providing now, okay? It's not a case of losing certificate, it's a case that we would eventually get rid of the certificates because we would be contracting out based on a service need that's out there and we would wanna work with the -- the private contractors that are out there today to continue an operation but not have it be that the certificates are then used to go and claim that they have the established right for that work.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Okay. I'll let that one remain there, we'll -- I'm sure we'll revisit it when we hear other testimony and we'll go forward.

Two more questions and I'll let the rest of the Committee offer up their comments. One about the section -- section six, frequency of consultant evaluations. And I only bring that up as a lead into consultancy and so forth.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Sure.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): There's one concept that we're sorta gonna explore about how to potentially save dollars by using in-house DOT engineers and there's been various comments over the years, this year no different, on whether to use in-house DOT expertise or to use out-of-DOT expertise by virtue of consultants.

And so sometimes we hear that we have to find efficiencies and be very prudent with our dollars and I just want to explore what that means or what it doesn't mean because I sort of sense that there's a you can't have it both ways kind of a scenario here.
It's great if we can use in-house engineers at a lower cost but your department used to be up to 5,000 personnel and now we're down to about 2,700, almost half.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Closer to three, yeah.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): So when you don't have the expertise, you're forced to use consultants so what I would like the Committee and the public to understand is what does that really mean and you don't just wanna throw out -- let's use efficiencies or let's just hire in-house and make it cheaper -- so there's gotta be a greater understanding what that means or doesn't mean.

And that's probably a lengthy conversation but I would like maybe a few moments of your time to give you a -- give us a big picture of those comments and then we can explore that as we continue through the session.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: And at the last committee meeting that I had last week, it was acknowledged that I bring up people from the staff and that that committee turned around and said they really appreciate that because they know that the expertise is there and they really appreciate the fact that I bring them forward.

But before I turn it over to Mark Rolfe who's been involved with this for over 37 years, I want to give you my perspective on it from the standpoint that I went from a Metro-North where it was all of our employees down to running a system down in Florida which was a new start-up.

With a new start-up, 97 percent of my budget was in contracted operations because you cannot afford to
buy all of the expertise that you need to start a railroad up and keep it going.

Over time, as you know more and more of that expertise is now embedded and you've gotta train your people to go and understand that, you put it into their contracts that there's gonna be a transfer of that knowledge to your own personnel so you're not paying profit and overhead going forward.

Here in Connecticut, I found that there is a symbiotic relationship between both the in-house and the contractors that we're hiring because there's a value in both sides and it does come down to at the end of the day looking at how many people would we need to hire to go and meet this, can we contract it out and if it's gonna stay, if it's not gonna be one new regulation that we don't know if it's gonna be here for another year or so, you're better off contracting out than you are to go and hire people and then cut them out.

So from my end, you know, this is a balance that we constantly look to go and maintain as we're going forward but I'm now gonna give you one of the experts that's been dealing with it for 37 years to get his perspective on it because we've had a recent request from this. Mark.

MARK ROLFE: Thank you, Commissioner. This is an issue we've been dealing with for a long time in terms of striking a balance between what work we self-perform with our own staff and what work we put out to consultant firms.

And there is a bat'leth there. We need to hire the best experts for new innovative projects. For example, the Q Bridge. Q Bridge was a unique
structure type. That was expertise we did not have in-house so we sought to go outside and hire the best designers, a Nashville firm, that could perform that work for us.

That applies to a whole range of things. Unique elements of our transportation system that we just don't have that expertise in-house whether it’s a moveable bridge on the rail or on the road system, it's signal systems on the railroad or any other unique feature. We just can't be experts on everything so first and foremost we look to the consultant community to provide that level of expertise. Whether it's in Connecticut or it's national -- a national need.

Secondly, we look to manage to -- manage our program so that we have a steady workflow through our workforce. There are peaks and valleys. When major projects start, there's a huge demand on resources in order to provide that level of service.

I can go back to the Q Bridge example. So once we completed the design, now we had to build the bridge and we needed the construction oversight and that required about 50 people to oversee the construction of the bridge alone, let alone the interchange next to it.

We did not have sufficient staff in-house to meet that demand so again, we looked to the consultant community to meet that -- meet that peak demand and overflow need for additional staff.

Another things I'd point out to you, it is hiring more state employees. It's not just the cost of salary, it's benefits but even with an office, we have office space constraints. In our building, it
was built to a certain size. We would have to look at additional office space if we were looking to bring considerably more engineering services work than we do today.

That's because we have a centralized design office. Virtually all of our design work is done out of our headquarters building in Newington on the Berlin Turnpike and there are space constraints there.

Yes, our numbers are down and yes we can accommodate a few more. We have been hiring but at a certain point, we're gonna reach capacity and then we'd have to look at additional space.

So there's -- there's fixed costs associated with hiring new staff. There's the benefits and everything else that comes along with it.

Finally, I'll just point out to you that when we do hire consultants, we require that there be a knowledge transfer. So when the consultants build a major project, they're not walking away with all the good experience. There's that knowledge transfer to our own staff so we can build that expertise and experience going forward.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Can I add just a little bit more onto it, Chair? You know, when I came here and we were down over 500 people just in terms of being able to do the plowing operations and everything else that was out there, I said to this committee that I needed the chance to take a look at the organization to make sure we were right staffed.

I get both sides of the argument the same way you do. The private sector is saying they can do things quickly, more quicker than we can do it and that they can be more efficient. And on the other side,
our unions are saying that, "You've cut so many jobs. Okay, every time we look for efficiency you cut the jobs", okay. And there's truth in both sides of that. And that's why I say it's a balance. And that's why we look to maintain that balance going forward.

I'm the first one to come in here to go and say when I feel that we need some more people but I've also said to you I need to rationalize that as we're going forward. And that's why I'd like to say that I know you're gonna hear both sides of the argument, I'd like you to know that we are really diligent in how we go and look at this and I'm very grateful, in this case to the OPM who has turned around and worked with us this past year to reduce the number of vacancies that are there so we can start filling these positions and be in the best position going forward.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you. I think that's helpful for us as the committee and the public as well. Maybe one last little follow-up and then I'll go to my last question.

So when you do have to use consultants for -- for whatever you need to do because we just don't have either the personnel or the expertise, does there ever come a point where the project is large enough that you use the consultants and maybe it becomes that going forward it might be prudent to get more in-house so that you can at least go forward for similar projects so that you don't have to do it over and over.

So I guess the question sort of becomes at what point can you make that decision and if you're able to make that as a proposal suggestion, what is it
then that you needed? Do you need appropriations or hiring authorization from the Governor and the legislature? I just wanna make sure I understand the process. And we can get the numbers later but that's sorta where I'd like to know what we need to be presented for when and if the time comes when maybe we can assist and make the right decisions prudently.

MARK ROLFE: First of all, before we ever hire a consultant, there's always a determination that we need to go outside to perform the needed service. We always look to fully engage our own staff first before we ever go outside. So that -- that's in the first instance.

Secondly, I don't think that -- I'm sorry, could you repeat the question?

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Whether or not we've ever reached the point in meeting our contracts where we did move it over [Inaudible 00:20:12].

MARK ROLFE: Yeah, so we have embedded staff within our consultant firms for our specific assignments if there was a need to gain some experience, some work experience for critical job functions we embed staff.

When the legislation was passed for design build authorizing the department to move forward with that, we've been engaging staff with consulting firms so we can gain that experience and eventually manage those entirely on our own.

So the answer to your question is yes, we look for those opportunities and when we have staff available, we move in that direction.
SENATOR LEONE (27TH): But -- and the ultimate authorization or approval would have to come from the Governor and the legislature to hire more personnel, correct?

MARK ROLFE: So we have an authorized staffing level and yes, if we're gonna exceed that then we would need additional appropriations and authorizations.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Right, thank you. Then let me go to the last question, then I'll finish up there and let others chime in.

So one of the bills we have on the agenda is an act concerning rail infrastructure improvements. And that is our concept bill so that members that submitted many proposals to us as a Committee wanted to inquire on how to increase ridership and increase services mainly along the branch lines such as the Waterbury line, the New Canaan line, the Norwalk line and then of course I don't wanna forget about the main line, shoreline east.

So there's a lot of wants for either new rails, new services, but then again we also have to understand that whatever we need to do to increase server ship does cost money, we'd have to find funding and maybe that also includes personnel.

So the bill that we have is so that members can sort of put in the request for what it is they need along the branch lines and any other needs so that we have a sense of what we need to do. But I just wanted to give you a chance or to get your comments on what would that mean to expand some of these requests along the branch lines, what kind of dollars are we talking about and what are some of your current constraints that we would need to consider before we
start looking for more funding, which of course we would have to find the money. We just came from -- we just got off of a very large tolling proposal that hasn't gone forward because it's all about the funding.

So we all agree we need to do more but the funding is where the -- we've been at odds in how to find those dollars. So that's sort of the backdrop. But rails are -- rails are not cheap and I just wanted to make sure that we have an understanding what that does and does not mean.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: All right, I'm gonna take the first crack at them, then I'll look over and see whether or not Garrett wants to dive into these waters.

But from my end, what has happened, I've been in a number of meetings throughout the state. You know, you've got a balance that's going on, the people on Shore Line East feel that they were deprived of services in order to get the Hartford Line started. The Hartford Line is looking at a possibility that we're gonna lose the lease cars that we have there because Massachusetts wants them back and everybody wants cars and very difficult to purchase old cars.

The New Haven Line needs more cars for the operation which would increase the ability to go in and operate on the -- on the New Canaan Line as well as the main line.

And the other end of it is that we're looking to go on by the push/pull with the latest generation of diesels so that way they're as environmentally friendly as possible and we can increase the
services that are on both the Danbury Line and the Waterbury Line.

I got hit very hard on the Waterbury Line because there's some of your fellow Senators and Representatives feel that the Waterbury Line has been left behind for a number of years. So one of the decisions we had made even when I was the President of Metro-North was aside from putting in a positive train control, we were willing to delay the positive train control under the Federal guidelines. We'll meet all the guidelines but we want to get a signal system in there so we're never again in the future set up with a system that a train has to go 30 miles before a train can start in the opposite direction or follow it.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Real quick, you just mentioned positive train control. Before people think that we're not adhering to that --

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: That's what I just said.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): -- we're on -- we're on schedule. And that's by the end of this year.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: End of this year we'll have it. Matter of fact, I just had the report on that last week, we are totally in compliance and all the testing has been going very well.

So we will be announcing very shortly, you know, all the areas that have been cut in. We're still working with Metro-North as they're going to the final testing with the Federal government but everything is lined up. Believe me, I've got -- you know, some Federal components there that are asking the question all the time and we actually meet with the FRA every single month on the entire corridor
here which goes all the way down to Washington to Boston to go and talk about where we are with the contractors that are providing it.

So the answer is yes, we are and we are definitely on track and will be completed by the end of this year. The reason I brought up the Waterbury Line is that one of the things we wanted with the Waterbury Line was aside from positive train control, a signal system so that way there we would be in a position of being able to provide more service.

We're now also sitting down with the MGA and Metro-North to talk about can we run some more direct service from different stations, both on the branch lines and coming in on the main line.

So yeah, I'm very aware of my budget constraints on it. The Governor has been very, very forceful in terms of wanting us to be extending more revenues that are coming in onto the rail services and the mass transit services going forward. We're doing everything we can to clean up what's out there to try and get the best speeds that we can.

And of course I would like to say to you, you know, anything you can do to go and help us on the funding side of this would be tremendous but you are right. You're gonna get hit. I just came from a meeting this morning as well where I turned around and said the best thing we can do right now is get a study going on that because we're also looking at the possibility that within the next two to three years we will have access into Penn Station and we need to be looking at what that provides in terms of increasing the capacity to put more trains out there.
So you know, you're gonna see that I'm gonna be -- I'm gonna be supporting requests to try and get some more studies going right now that will put us in the best position possible to go after Federal money as well to try and deal with these things going forward.

Garrett, did you want to add anything?

GARRETT EUCALITTO: If you don't mine. To the Chair?

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Yeah.

GARRETT EUCALITTO: So the only thing I would add is two things -- one, when it comes to specific cost estimates for certain branch lines, we're in the process. The Appropriations Committee has asked for information on that. We're in the process of collecting that and to submit to the Appropriations Subcommittee so we can pass that along to this committee as well so you have the same information.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): That's the other follow-up question so that's perfect, thank you.

GARRETT EUCALITTO: Yeah. And then the other thing I would add that was, you know, a lot of the focus is on the capital needs and the capital costs but we as a department just need to be cognizant of we can purchase all the rail cars and do all the sightings and capital cost but for us, then it comes down to what are the operational costs and the AO appropriations that we need to seek from the legislature.

So that's something that, you know, isn't always a cost -- factored into the cost that we're talking
about so that's what we're trying to get to the Appropriations Committee.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you. Again, if you can let us have that information as well so that we know that if we were to say -- let's expand the Waterbury Branch Line, what would those costs be and where would the dollars come from.

And in terms of where the dollars could come from, I've heard comments both in the public and privately that we can chase Federal dollars and that there's enough Federal programs to maybe offset some of these needs if the state of Connecticut can't do it on their own.

Is that true or are there programs that we could be doing? Not just for Waterbury but for all these other rail lines.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: I understand the question and the answer is there's -- you know, you've heard already about, you know, the facts, particularly on the rail side there's RIFT funding but remember again, that's loans that you're talking about that still have to be paid back.

That one -- that one is the easiest one to talk about because we've heard a lot of availability of those RIFT loans going forward and that they're at a very good and desirable rate right now.

The other issue, though, is there again, opportunities for earmarks. They're talking about again for the first time putting earmarks back in at the Federal level.

I don't wanna try and guess at how successful it would be at not getting earmarks but what Garrett
has brought out is again what the Governor has said to me. "You know, you've been successful in the past in going after capital dollars, how are we gonna offset the operating costs?"

So well we're trying to balance it out right now and we're having a lot of meetings on where it is that we can do transit oriented development, what are some of the other economic generators we can get that can help offset some of those costs. We've been talking about it on the line -- branch lines as well.

So it's not a simple answer. There is, you know, obviously we do get support from the Federal government, we'll go after every dollar that we can on that end. But again, a lot easier to get those loans than it is to get an earmark that gives you money that doesn't require a payment back.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Commissioner, last follow-up question on this topic and I'm done. So you mentioned that if we were to pick a project and we needed to -- and it's gonna cost x-dollars, before we can even start that, we first have to do an analysis on is it justifiable and is it necessary and that means you have to do a study, correct?

So you can't just fund the project. First we have to do a study to see that it warrants doing the project and if that's correct -- tell me if I'm wrong -- then there's a cost of doing the study and so we would first have to find funding for that and what does a typical study potentially cost?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Well, I just got out of a meeting where we talked about what it would take to do a study on one of our lines going in. And the
study alone would be about a million dollars because it's an extremely dense line, okay, and what we need is not just whether or not you have the ability to put in additional trackage, whether or not you can -- it's whether or not it will actually increase capacity and your ability to run in.

So what you have to be looking at is what is the cost that that project would be, how much property would you have to take, do you have to extend catenary poles if it's in an overhead power area.

Okay and all of this goes into it as well as having a sit-down and, you know, it's a nice thing that today when we do schedule changes, we're able to model those schedule changes before. So where in the past we would do a schedule change and then three or four weeks later I had to make modifications for what we missed when we were trying to figure out the best way to do it, we now actually model everything so that we try to figure out all the glitches before it happens.

But all that has to go into -- you know, and I'm -- I'm assuming we're being specific about rail-type operations right now. And that's where I'm saying yes, it is critical because you're not gonna get money if you can't turn around and say what the costs are going to be. You know, you may get money for a study. We may be successful getting the Federal partners to participate in a study but you're not gonna get money for doing a project even though they want to see shovel-ready projects. Shovel-ready projects mean you've already done the analysis on it and can prove that there's a value for this going forward.
SENATOR LEONE (27TH): So if we do the study portion, is that a year, a six-month timeframe or is it -- I mean what's the range so that our Committee's sorta got a sense of this.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: You're giving me all the ugly questions and thank you for it because the truth of the matter is, most studies take about a year, okay, you're right on that. It takes a full year because what you're looking at is everything from capacity utilization to land acquisition to what it has to do to change the profile of the curves, what it has to do with the -- change the -- so yes, the answer is that it's more study to be done in order to go and have it complete and ready to go.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you for taking the time and weighing in on some of those topics. I'm sure they'll come up more throughout the session and I appreciate that and look forward to continuing the discussion. So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative Devlin? Representative O'Dea, Representative Zawistowski and Senator Cassano and I'm sure as you have in the past, if we pass this one-hour mark and we still have questions outstanding we can send the questions to you that you guys can answer and we can put up on our CGA website with the full answers outside of that hour. So I appreciate your efforts.

So, I'll turn it over to my ranking member, Representative Devlin followed by Representative O'Dea.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Always nice to see you, Commissioner. I
listened with great interest the conversation regarding rail and I look forward to the discussions forthcoming.

We've talked a lot about having an integrated transportation which looked at all modes of travel. But when it comes to rail specifically, because we have a very enthusiastic Waterbury Branch contingent who is with us today. And I know there are other branch lines also that are of importance. Metro-North as well.

I chose to buy my home in Fairfield, Connecticut because it was the first place I could -- to live in Connecticut versus New York -- it was the first place I could kind of afford and stand the commute which at that time was an hour and ten minutes to Grand Central. It's an hour and 20 minutes now.

And that absolutely affects how people make decisions and that's important to the state of Connecticut because most people commuting into New York on Metro-North are doing so to collect large salaries that they bring back to the state of Connecticut to be able to afford the things that pay for the majority of tax revenue coming -- coming to our state.

But is there an integrated rail plan or are you working on that as opposed to what we need with the Waterbury Branch, what we might need with the New Canaan Branch, what we might need with Danbury, Metro-North, Shore Line East -- like looking at them all together? Because I'm sure they each play in.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: So one, I appreciate the question because -- and I wish only that I had Rich
and Rusty here. Rich lost his father yesterday, otherwise he would've been here for the hearing.

But that's exactly what they've been working on. We've been looking at it holistically, how we're gonna tie bus service in not only to make the connections but we've also sat down with the Department of Housing as we make our future decisions. Where are we gonna put the housing and are we gonna do it in such a way that we can make a transit component of that housing so that way we're providing people access to get down to the rail stations, to be able to go to the other parts of the state and we're looking at it state-wide.

So the answer is yes, we are already working on it. There's a lot that, you know, you and I have opportunities to talk quite often and I'm looking forward to another opportunity to be able to sit down and since we won't be talking about that other thing that got brought up, I'll be happy to go and talk about some of the things we're looking at. What we're looking to go and do.

The hard part with particularly tying in all the bus and the rail components is again, a lot easier to go and let the capital funds kick some of this off but it's very serious conversation about what the operating costs are gonna be.

But if we tie this in to our housing components and the other parts that are going on, we've met I know recently with Bridgeport, talking about what are the opportunities there. You know, the CTfastrak busing that was put in, which I had nothing to do with but was so pleasantly surprised to find it when I came back here, we have found that the New Britain mayor has come forward several times, has kicked off now
already four TODs because people see those as permanent stations and I see them as the future of where light rail is going to be that's gonna connect. And we need to be looking at it also in terms of our airport and the other parts.

I get hit all the time. Every representative that's coming in wants to know what is gonna be their connector that's gonna get them to the main line that can get them down so that they also can say they provide services.

And I will take this opportunity, though, and say I used to live in Hamden and had to commute to New York because I couldn't afford to move any closer. So it's two-and-a-half hours each way and you know, so I do know what it's like to go and commute and I will tell you we are working right now -- the Governor said to me, "Start getting me every minute you can on that schedule." We are sitting down to look at as we're getting closer and closer to the finish line with positive train control and we start taking a couple of the minutes that we had to put in there by the Federal government out -- that's not gonna be the overall answer but it'd be nice to start saying that we could [crosstalk]. Exactly so that's what we're working on.

So the answer to your question is yes we are working on integrated plans. Garrett, do you wanna say any more on it?

GARRETT EUCALITTO: No.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTE: Okay.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay and I do look forward to having constructive discussions about how we can move forward with our transportation.
COMMISSIONER GIULIETTE: Sure.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): The other topic I just wanted to touch on was U-Pass.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTE: Sure.

REP. DEVLIN (134Th): And so U-Pass is, you know, since 2017, clearly you're indicating some, you know, great success with it so far. And the interest to extend to private universities. Would the goal I would trust would be sort of get the same level and the same plan that the public universities have that would be extended at the same rate to private universities as well.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTE: The discussion that we're having right now is -- is the difference between whether or not it involves the bus component and the rail component, it should be a little bit more as a rail component and but being fair across the board.

So the answer is yes, we're looking at a fairness across the board because the truth of the matter is, this has been, you know, I saw this worked out in Florida where in Gainesville the best system ended up putting in a semester charge and it ended up being that that, the University of Florida now owns the Gainesville Bus System because they put so much into it that they're able to now demand that they're gonna provide the busing to go to games, they're gonna provide -- and the entire system now feeds in and out of the university.

So when I came here and I saw that we had the -- well, I was actually the President of Metro-North when I had the concern over the U-Pass system going in. Jim Redeker was here at the time and was pushing very hard for it and it made sense and was
logic and the issue is for systems like our bus system which have a lot of room for capacity growth, it's fantastic.

With our rail system, some of our rail systems can use that infusion. Other rail systems are pretty close to capacity now. So we're balancing that out. But the answer to your specific question is we are looking for it to be the same system going forward.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. And then I know that sometimes audits can seem daunting. However, in the spirit of wanting to gather real data and information about usage because I know there's requests potentially in parts of the state where there's not a lot of frequency of transportation available.

So would the department welcome an audit by the public auditors to look at the U-Pass system which would give you data to make data-driven decision that would support what you're currently doing and potential opportunities to also improve.

GARRETT EUCALITTO: So I mean this -- the existing program already falls under what the auditors have the opportunity to look at but in terms of them being able to so analysis, you know, passenger analysis and a fair elasticity analysis -- I don't think they have that capacity. We, in-house, planned to before we enter into these agreements, look at -- our experts in the public transit bureau are gonna look at -- is there service there already.

If not, that's a discussion we'll need to have with the university as to, you know, maybe there needs to be a different little discussion if they want to start new service. We don't have funds to start new
services. So that's something that we'll need to come to legislature for and seek to expand operations or negotiate a higher rate with that university.

So that -- but the auditors or public accountants can look at everything we do.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Great and when will you have that information available?

GARETT EUCALITTO: The -- in terms of which routes -- when we get approached by a private university, that's when we'll look at that geographic area.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. Great. Thank you. Thank you very much. That's all I have.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative Devlin. Representative O'Dea followed by Representative Zawistowski followed by Representative Lavielle and Representative Farnen and is there anyone else?

Senator Cassano will jump ahead of two of you, I just haven't decided which two yet. Yes, Representative O'Dea and then I'll remake my list.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Commissioner. As you know, I represent your second favorite town, New Canaan, but we can just keep that between ourselves.

And we talked about the rail improvements and my First Selectman Kim Moynihan's here to talk about that later but obviously it's imperative to New Canaan that the improvements that are being asked for by West COG for 12 years now as one of the top priorities. I it's cost something.
But just going through your bill, we can get into those things at another time. The U-Pass makes a lot of sense to me. My son goes to the University of Utah and they ride free public transit at their university.

My only question or concern is -- and I can't stand seeing buses empty. In fact, I just got cut off by one which we'll get into in section -- the presumption for buses merging on the right-of-way on section 15. We can go over that in a second.

But my concern is if we open it up to the private universities that we kick off paying passengers that need it. So in other words, is there gonna be a way to make sure that at Yale the students don't overwhelm the public system such that others that need it will be kicked off?

GARRETT EUCALITTO: Yeah, Representative O'Dea, that's exactly the type of analysis we want to do before entering into any expansion to the private -- each individual -- each circumstance is gonna be different so we want to look at that route capacity and the fare elasticity there and whether we -- our public transit bureau who do these types of analysis every day, looking at the ridership levels, what they expect the demand would be for those students on that route.

Because if it crowds out other users or, you know, you can't get onto the train or on the bus, that's something that would concern us and that would be an increased operational cost if we need to add more buses or more service which we would want to have that discussion well before implementing that agreement.
And that's why you'll see in the legislation it is a partnership with OPM so we can have the -- that level of discussion with them as well.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): I think it's a great idea, you know, empty buses are a waste of money but encouraging a new generation to come in and use it all the time is a great thing.

And going on line, section 10, the open containers. It's -- I have not seen this number and I fault myself for it. The $152 million dollars that has been transferred away from repair and upgrades to our transportation system to education because of the open container law.

I guess my question is, could we carve out for public transit the Uber Lift, ride share, taxicabs, can they be carved out and still comply with the Federal regs to allow the $152 million to go into use. In other words, if you understand my question, so we -- right now we have open container for all vehicles, correct?

If we -- if we eliminate that open container law in section 10 but allow an exception for ride share, public transit, limo -- would we lose the Federal money, that same $152 million dollars, if you understand my question.

GARRETT EUCALITTO: We'll have to check with NTSA on that. I know there are exceptions specifically for like limousines and motor coaches. But I don't know if a TNC ride share operation would qualify under that. But we'll check with NTSA and get back to you on that.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Look, at the end of the day, it's a double-edged sword but the numbers that you
quoted, Commissioner, are disturbing to me and I didn't know it was $152 million dollars which is a lot of money.

So thank you for looking into that. And then the motor bus right-of-way, somebody who does -- defend bus -- buses through private insurance as a litigator, I do like the concept of section 15 of allowing motor buses the right-of-way, presuming that's both private and publicly operated.

And I think that makes a lot of sense. The one thing I would point out is 8:51 this morning there was a public bus that used the right-hand lane coming into here to cut across the 84 interchange improperly. So I don't wanna get the guy fired but he should know not to drive in the right-hand lane.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Yeah and what time was that?

REP. O'DEA (125TH): At exactly 8:51 right outside of this building. But in any event, it makes sense to me, the bus right-of-way, I believe a number of other states have that.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: I had it -- we passed it in Florida before I came up here and it was in effect because what happens is, you wanna be able to encourage that the buses are able to operate and maintain a schedule. And what happens with the -- that the density of traffic builds up, it's very difficult for them to get back in.

So they passed a law that says you have to let them back in so that way they're -- the motorist knows that they can get a ticket for not allowing a bus to come back into the lane so it can continue on. So it was very -- I would say it was very successful.
I don't have the latest numbers on it but it was well accepted down in Florida.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative Zawistowski, Senator Cassano, Representative Lavielle, Representative Carney, Representative Farnen.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and good morning. You're here a little longer this time. Last time we met, had this hearing in 2019, I think you were here all of three days. [Laughter]

So anyway, I have a question on the U-Pass system. The legislation that you're proposing here mentions that the students would have access to bus and off peak rail transportation.

Do the students currently have access to on peak rail or not? I was under the impression that they did.

GARRETT EUCALITTO: Yes, they current -- the current users of the U-Pass system which is the public university systems, they do have access to that.

This language is crafted this way out of concern that some of the additional schools that'll be seeking to join this are located on some of our heavily-traveled rail systems such as the main New Haven line.

So before we were to go full bore into that allowing access to peak rail service, we want to see and have those discussions with those schools and see what the user is. We don't want to open it up and have the peak rail service on the New Haven line be
flooded with U-Pass users unless we do that full analysis on what the potential ridership is.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Does this actually impact the existing students?

GARRETT EUCALITTO: It will. We would need to -- when we renegotiate the contracts with the public universities, we would be having that discussion but we would also be talking to OPM about maybe there's options of doing a plus-up like you do the -- when you take the train today and you buy an off-peak fare but you're really on a peak fare train, you can pay that cost differential. That's what we want to have discussions with OPM and the universities on.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: And I would say that we have had the analysis for the students that are utilizing it. They get to ride within the state of Connecticut but they have to purchase a ticket to go further into New York.

So it's to their advantage to go into the off-peak because they get that other ticket at a reduced rate already. So I don't have the exact numbers as to who's using the peak and the off-peak but up until this point, it's predominantly been in the off-peak and that's why it was well-received on the Metro-North side as well.

So we're being cautious on this exactly to Representative O'Dea's point that you don't wanna turn around and set something that affects your current users of the system so that's why we're looking at it this way here and -- and I wanna say out of what we've seen so far, I'm not anticipating that being a major pushback.
REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): As far as the private university goes, you would be open to negotiating possibly a higher rate than the public universities?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: I'm gonna say that again, it's gonna depend on where they are in location to what the services are currently available. Whether those services that are currently available need to be boosted by the ridership that can be coming in there so the answer is yes, we would be looking at whether or not what we're proposing right now is going to work there or we would have to look at a different number coming forward.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay and under the existing program, can students still go up to Springfield?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Again, it's only within the state of Connecticut but yeah. You're the first one to go and ask about going across the Mass line. Everything has been about going down into New York but it's only for within the state of Connecticut.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): So they would have to get off in probably Windsor Locks.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: No, they buy the additional ticket from Windsor Locks into Springfield.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay. I'm trying to understand also how the -- how it works with Amtrak. I know that if I get on in Windsor Locks or Windsor and buy a ticket to go down to New Haven on the Hartford line, if there's not capacity I can still get on Amtrak for the same ticket?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: That was the deal that was cut. We're in negotiations with Amtrak right now so
I'll be coming back to you as we continue with those negotiations. As you know, there's a lot of consternation over that agreement of this past year. We had to work out deals to go and get additional cars put out there and we also got the right from them to run additional trains on holidays.

So let me say to you that [Inaudible 00:50:30] what is there right now but we are in negotiations right now talking about how to make this work more seamlessly going forward.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay, yeah, because I just was confused about whether or not we were actually having to reimburse Amtrak at a higher rate than our own subsidy as well.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: I can't give you an answer to that right now. Let me look into it.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay and one more thing that you had mentioned. Massachusetts wants its rail cars back. Is this all on the Hartford Line and how does this impact in the long run?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: In the long run, we always knew that this was going to be. In other words, the decision to go and lease these cars had a date specific and we began a process to looking at going and purchasing new cars.

So where we're at right now is we have to work it out with them for extending the lease that's there but they're already know to not think about any further as we want you to go and get cars because we'd like to get our cars back.

So yeah, so there's a negotiation that -- I will tell you one other thing is that it's nice to have
the support of a representative from Massachusetts that is been strong in this and is -- is completely behind it and we will get it worked out. I've got -- I wanna say we've got a good relationship with Massachusetts, they understand. But they're also in a position that, you know, they don't wanna extend their lease on the cars because they have a need for it.

So we are looking right now around the industry to see if there's anywhere where we can pick up some other cars so we can relieve it on both ends. If we're successful there, great. And if we're not successful there, I've gotta beg, borrow and steal with Massachusetts to try and keep things going.

REP. ZAWISTOWSKI (61ST): Okay, thank you very much and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Mr. Commissioner, you are authorized to beg and borrow, not to steal. [Laughter] Senator Cassano followed by Representative Lavielle.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want -- two things. I want to follow up on Representative O'Dea's comment. It's been a rather tumultuous year as everybody's debated tolls and the latest proposal was $170 million dollars and here we're looking at $150, $2 million instead of $170. You have to finish your beer before you get in the car.

It's a no-brainer. It's an absolute no-brainer. Nobody should have beer in the car or drink in the car whatever it might be but apparently one of the few that do that and I would encourage that we move forward because that's a very easy form of revenue.
What I really wanna mention, however, is the -- going back to Chairman Leone -- Senator Leone's comment at the very beginning on contracting.

I don't know how understaffed you are in that engineering division. I've been here ten years and you've always been understaffed and probably 30 years before that you were always understaffed.

You talk about contracting out or hiring in. And the thing that bothers me and it continues to be missing is that we don't talk about partnering. I look over here and I see Tom Masias [phonetic]. Tom was in CROG. I don't see -- there's Tom -- and Colleen [phonetic], I don't know if Mark's here. He was at Manchester.

I say that because there's two people I know and there are hundreds like that in the state of Connecticut that we could partner with. When you're doing state roads and going through municipalities they have to be designed through DOT. That's ridiculous. We have very qualified engineers that meet the same criteria. You guys steal them away from us eventually because you're short-handed all the time but they can do the job.

And much more can be accomplished at a state level if we contract with the COGs, with the municipalities, to do the base design work and then the approval would be from DOT, of course. But that's something that there's been talked about and has not been implemented.

This is a cost saver. A time saver and so I would hope that we would make a serious effort to finally do that. That was one of the goals when the -- when
we gave more power to the COGs and we haven't followed up on that, so.

COMMISSIONER GUILIETTI: Before Mark jumps in, first I'd like to tell you that my experience in the last year, being here has been almost every municipality I've gone in, we've partnered with that municipality and we offer the services, a lot of times, that they don't have the expertise for. And more than one's going to work with them and we do work with the COGs but Mark, I'll turn it over to you to go and talk about it from your perspective.

MARK ROLFE: Yeah, so we do have some programs where we -- we work closely with the municipalities. The lock set program, the local bridge program -- those are two great examples and we've been very successful with those.

I think, to your broader comment, though, of can we share resources. I think to a degree we look for those opportunities but I think I would maybe point out to you that not all the MPOs, not all the municipalities have the same capabilities. So some of the larger MPOs, and certainly larger towns have their own engineering staff but many, many of the smaller MPOs and certainly the small towns do not have that capability so rather than them providing resources to us, we're more likely providing resources back to them, they typically provide on their own.

SENATOR COSSANO (4TH): And I understand that. I have Andover in my district. Andover's a very small town, it doesn't have that capability. But Andover's a part of Prague [phonetic] and Prague does have that capability.
So we should -- the more we explore -- I'm not talking about designing a highway, I'm talking about local bridge repairs and local road improvements and things like that. Things that could be done on a routine basis that should not have to be done at DOT. You've gotta worry about the two bridges in the state of Connecticut -- the rail in the state of Connecticut, not a 50-foot bridge in Andover and Coventry wherever it might be.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Yeah, I just -- again, played for lots of program, highly successful, I think without exception it's been well received by everybody. We should maybe look to programs like that.

SENATOR COSSANO (4TH): So let's expand that model. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Senator Cassano. Representative Lavielle, Representative Carney, Representative Farnen. Representative Morin. Representative McCarthy-Vahey, Representative McGorty and we are going to move to the public at that point. And if there are any other questions, I need you to submit them either through the Committee or to the Commissioner directly and we will post and return those answers to you as soon as possible. Thank you.

Yes, I was turning it over to you, Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. By the way, I've -- to the Chairs, I think this format with having the Commissioner here on a day when there were few bills on the hearing is a good idea.
Anyway, good morning. And nice to see you all again. We've just seen each other in Appropriations not too long ago. And so I have just questions about two things and the first one we discussed already and you confirmed some -- my goodness, that noise outside.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative Lavielle, if you could hold on for a minute. This -- the outside chants will interfere with our recording system, I believe. Can you just do a quick audio check to make sure we're able to record over that?

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Thank you. That's what I thought. [Laughter]

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Actually, Mr. Clerk, I believe that the changing has been subsided -- I think we're okay.

All right, sorry to interrupt you, Representative Lavielle, please proceed.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): That's fine, thank you very much. Sorry, anyway we've just seen each other in Appropriations and there's something that you confirmed for me there that I think is of interest to bring up here so I'll do it quickly.

We were discussing the U-Pass and my question had been when you were talking about what the revenue stream would be from making the U-Pass more widely available. Did you take into account the revenue you would be losing from people who have been up until now paying for a single ticket?

So just to confirm that and have your comment for a moment.
COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: And the answer to that is yes, we've had very limited utilization. That's why the limited utilization is far surpassed by the fact that you make the ability for all the students to be able to utilize it and you're collecting based on that total number.

So believe me, it tremendously outweighs any loss that would be perceived by someone that buying a ticket -- because technically speaking they still are buying a ticket to the program. Not paying the same level they were paying before. But then again they have much more opportunity now.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): So in essence, it does actually drive up the ticket sales.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Yes, it does.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): And is -- would that be -- I don't believe we talked about rail tickets but would that drive up the rail ticket sales at all?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: And -- and that's why we were saying that we're -- we're still going through that right now and that's why we're looking to move it to the off-peak because the potential -- up until this point it has not affected our ability to handle it on the rail side. Going with a lot of other universities that would be much closer to our rail system could.

And right now not all of our rail systems are at capacity but particularly the main line going down, that could have a -- the reverse effect. So that's why we're being very diligent about it and we're looking at it on a case-by-case basis going forward.
REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Okay, thank you. And I -- I did say ticket sales instead of ridership because it's really the ticket sales that we're -- the amount of the ticket sales we're talking about, so.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Yeah but the ridership does us an awful lot of good with the Federal government so I take both ends of it very positively.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): You have a point. Well, thank you. And then the second subject is the one that you could expect me to bring up because I've been bringing it up for ten years. So here we go.

The -- so I live on the Danbury Line and as you know -- and we went through -- it is correct to say that some money has been spent on the Danbury Line in recent years and particularly the revamp of the signalization system. I always like to say signaling system but -- has -- was necessary, obviously.

I'd had some constituents over the years point things out to me like -- well, it's great they did this but we've still only got five peak trains in the a.m. and only three are before 9:00 a.m. because 10:00 to us isn't really peak but it seems to be peak for Metro-North.

The late-night trains are still the same time. The speed is a little slower. We know that's the case all over the line. But there is a feeling, of course, that while much has changed, it hasn't really changed for the riders. That they feel like their status quo is about the same after all that.

And so in that -- knowing that, with that backdrop, you know, just a couple things for your comments. One is that we did -- I remember Commissioner
Redeker agreed to and we voted on a rail study for that line. One of the many but it was more recent.

We had discussions about a shuttle for part of the line where there's the highest ridership. And that sort of -- that actually came from the DOT, that idea didn't come from us, it came from -- from your predecessors.

And -- and then the other sort of thing lurking in the background is that while there might be some appetite for making discernable changes to the Danbury Line, there's another effort looming in the background that might divert some of the traffic from the north end of the line away through another route which would make our spending money on the entire line seem less attractive.

So I just wondered if you could kind of give me comments and an update on all of that in your thoughts.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: So let's keep it on the positive side of it first. Where we are right now is that we're buying more cars so that way they're the latest in terms of locomotive technology that will provide for a much more efficient and long overdue upgrade to the line in terms of the quality of the ride that the people are gonna be getting in.

The other part of it is that we're also working with Metro-North because what we'd like to do is we're now seeing a change to what is the riding patterns going down. The rush hours are no longer the same. People are working four ten-hour days, three 12-hour days so it's affected that window that's going on and it's changed the market throughout the country, not just here in the Northeast.
So we're looking at the possibility of potentially starting trains even earlier because there's people that are on those 12-hour shifts and providing more direct line service in. Those are the positive things I can tell you we're working on right now.

With respect to the other issue you brought up, they wanted to go for a study, it's a combination study and they got some money put in from New York State to go and look at it. I've been dealing with that study forever. It's nice to think that you could go and put that line in. The, you know, I don't wanna preclude if they have an argument that a lot of people that are on the north end are going over to the Harlem line, they're gonna ride the trains in because the service is better over there.

It's going to be interesting to see what that study shows, how long it'll take to take a train to go from Danbury all the way over the Harlem Line and then through the movement to go over onto the Harlem Line and go down.

So that's somewhere off in the future and I -- the good thing about studies is they're done purely. So we'll see what the information is that comes back. But it doesn't change what we're going to do with the Danbury Line to increase the capacity on it and increase the opportunity for people to have more direct service into New York as we've completed this positive train control going forward.

So I would say we're not losing any focus on what we wanna do right now going forward. And we're watching and we'll obviously be interested in what that study on the Danbury to Harlem Line study produces.
REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): What are we expecting that would -- I guess it's not -- you're not doing it, right?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: No.

REP. LAVEIELLE (143RD): And so do you have any idea?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: No, I honestly -- you know, I know that, you know, because I used to live in that county -- hold on one second, we may have John Bernick being able to give us an answer on this. One second. The last I knew they got the money for the study. I don't even know that the study has begun, have you heard anything?

JOHN BERNICK: [background speaking]

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Hold on, Commissioner, just a second. If you trust John to give you information, we would, too and so [laughter] I was just gonna say, John, if you want to turn on your microphone, say your name for the record and then provide the answer that the Commissioner has thought you would.

JOHN BERNICK: I'm John Bernick, I'm the Assistant Rail Administrator at the Connecticut DOT. Yes, there was talk about the connecting what's commonly called the Maybrook Line. And it connects from Danbury over.

I don't believe that study has started yet. There's significant hurdles in -- in completing that work. It's privately-owned territory and the utility you'd get out of it in travel time savings I think is questionable, so I wouldn't put a lot of stock in that.
COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Yeah, I want to turn around and cover that a little bit, okay. From the standpoint [crosstalk]. And we do, we encourage the study. The study will turn around and give us our answers back.

John happens to know the same way I know what the condition of that line is, the privatization that's involved and the hurdles that would have to be overcome. But I don't wanna say that we've prejudged that study in any way, we're open to whatever that study comes back in with.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Thank you for that. I guess you have to do that but at the -- at the same time, you know, we've discussed this before, obviously, but the folks who did move to the Danbury Line towns because they felt they could actually get to New York in a decent amount of time and take a train back to where they had parked their car -- which is the main hurdle, by the way -- have been pretty disappointed over the years.

But I think one of the things that could help, which is not a dramatic change, it doesn't involve construction, I guess. Would you ever consider running later trains coming back from New York?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: The answer is yes. That's what we're looking into right now because we've seen the commuting times changing. Yes.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): And I agree with you about the commuting times changing. You go out to any so-called peak-hour train and the -- it's -- the number of people at the station in both Wilton and Cannondale and Branchville is dramatically reduced from where it used to be.
There used to be crowds of people and they are going on different days, different times but one of the big problems for people is that they will park, say in Branchville, and they'll get to New York at a decent hour I mean they can kinda rely on that. But then they have to stay late at work and they're there till 10:30 and they wanna come home and the only place they can get is the main line and their car's at home.

And I think that would be -- I think that would be very helpful.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Message is received and it is part of what we're looking at right now and that's why I mentioned we're looking at what's happened to the ridership patterns and the number of people that are going earlier and staying later because of that change.

It's also dramatically affected a lot of systems in terms of what's happened on Fridays. Friday has become the new Saturday for a number of systems. Unfortunately for us, we've got so much ridership on the weekend and in the off-peak, you know, there's almost no time that we have empty trains.

So that -- that argument about whether or not there's empty trains is not there. But the argument about whether or not we could be providing more service into the later night and the early morning is exactly what we're meeting with Metro-North on and we're trying to work out those schedules.

REP. LAVIELLE (143RD): Okay, I'm happy to hear that and any -- any updates that you can provide would -- I'd greatly appreciate because people are, you know,
they're always a bit frustrated. Very frustrated, I should say.

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMARI (96TH): Thank you. Representative Carney followed by Representative Farnen and Representative Morin.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Commissioner for your testimony. I just have a couple of questions related to two sections of the bill.

I guess my first question is regarding the U-Pass program and I just -- I just wanna be clear. So if a student gets on the train in New Haven and their final destination is Grand Central, they would have to pay from -- I don't know what the last stop is -- Greenwich to Grand Central.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: I'm sorry. Yeah, basically the Greenwich or Port Chester into Grand Central. They can ride to Greenwich for free but to go beyond Greenwich they have to have a ticket to go into Grand Central.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay. See, there's people cheering. [Laughter]

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Well, that's the first time I've had cheering going for me but okay. All right.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): I guess my other question is and maybe this is part of what you're going to look into but I know some of the rail lines are very heavily subsidized. Do you know how this would impact any of those subsidies?
COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: The U-Pass program itself? Not at this point because that's what we're looking at right now is what it's gonna -- the impact of those universities that are adjacent to the rail line. So don't have that answer for you right now and it's part of what we're looking at as we go to expand it but it is a tremendous opportunity for us because of the revenue that's potential out of it.

And I'll just add that in the current budget proposed by the Governor, you'll see that there's a portion from the U-PASS being moved on -- on budget to help offset any subsidies in the public transit section. And that's what we imagine that this -- any revenue received for additional contracts would then just offset the larger public transit subsidy.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay, all right, I appreciate that. I think it's a good idea, I certainly, though, share some of the concerns about peak and -- you know, especially particularly on the Metro-North line.

My other question is, I guess, regarding the open container law. I just wanted to know if -- if somebody -- if this law passes and someone is driving and you know, someone in the back seat is drinking a beer and they get pulled over, who's at fault? Is it the person in the back seat, the driver, or both?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: I have to get back to you on that, okay? You know, I'm hitting it from the financial impacts on it, not the -- you know. So let me get back to you on that. I'll talk to Motor Vehicle about it and try and get you an answer back.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): Okay.
COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Okay.

REP. CARNEY (23RD): All right, thank you very much, I appreciate that.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative Farnen followed by Representative Morin.

REP. FARNEN (132ND): Yes, good afternoon, good morning. First I'd like to thank you for your leadership on the expansion of the U-PASS program, I think it's a great idea.

Just want to share some of the concerns also. My constituents are on the Metro-North line going into New York City, the peak area especially in June when you already have a lot of college students coming into that it really is a lot.

And I also want to obviously echo from an economic development standpoint the fact that the trains going slower into New York City is -- is really harmful and really hurting. So anything that can be done, love to continue that conversation.

One thing that came up was related to CTfastrak earlier on and big supporter of busing -- busing in Connecticut. You're looking at the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority, the success that is.

But I do have some concerns about CTfastrak. Would you be able to get to me some like hard data on the actual ridership and fees that have been brought in through that ridership between New Britain and Hartford? I'd be curious to see that.

GARRETT EUCALITTO: Yes, so we actually do publish all of our ridership data for that route but we'll get you that in addition to revenue generation.
You know, as with any public transit system, it operates as a subsidy. There's no service in the state or the country that doesn't. But we'll get you that information.

REP. FARNEN (132ND): The problem with hearsay, hearing things second hand is I was also -- you know, someone was mentioning earlier in a meeting -- not this meeting -- about the pact that often the accountability for the riders getting on and off because of the speed of having to just go from one location to another, there's often not people who are paying fares and things like that and just curious, are those approximations, is that hard data and things like that.

GARRETT EUCALITTO: Yeah, we have information on that. We have calculations in terms of violating percentages. It's -- it's actually a system that a lot of the country public transit systems are moving to. Open door policy where you can board and you have proof of payment.

And we have inspectors who check the buses and ask for your tickets. And it's a lot of what Europe does, too, but we have percentages that we can give you in terms of showing who's actually showing proof of payment and who's not.

REP. FARNEN (132ND): Okay and some of that concern I have is just the fact that, you know, I am a frequent traveler from Fairfield to Stamford where I work and use a ten-day pass and many, many times I'm getting off in Stamford and no one's punched my ticket. Not that -- not trying to come clean here but -- you know.
COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: No, it's the content and I get it from both sides. You'll get the union complaint that they feel that there should be more people on there going and checking the tickets and that's why we've tried to go to making it much more easier to be able to download your ticket online, be able to have it and make it as customer-friendly as possible.

But we do look into that all the time in terms of, you know, how much variation is going on and to try and mitigate that going forward. Because there's always the argument that you could be bringing in more revenue if you turned around and caught all the fares that were out there.

So we're always balancing it out to how much do you extend on making sure that the revenue is all collected, okay, how much is really in fear evasion that justifies you going further. And at some point I may want to come and talk to the legislature about other ways of going and ensuring that we're getting that revenue collected.

We've tried other things in other parts of the country that I may be willing to come forward and discuss but that'll be another discussion.

REP. FARNEN (132ND): Okay, thank you very much.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): All right, Representative Farnen, we'll send the bill to you directly. I believe Representative Morin followed by Representative McCarthy-Vahey.

REP. MORIN (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hello, Commissioner and all that have joined you today.
I guess the good part is I really like section one. I really think that's a great idea for young people to have access to transportation -- college students. And I know people that have known me from many years ago will say -- how could you possibly support section ten.

We need to address the issue of people drinking and driving and you know, the argument that as long as you're the driver and you're not drinking it's okay. I think that time has come so I'm -- I'm good with that.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Well, I'm encouraged to hear that because from my end, one -- when I came here, I didn't even realize that you could have an open container in Connecticut. I'm so used to being in states that don't allow it that I was a little bit surprised.

I have heard the con to that. The next generation likes having that because you can party but when you see the statistics and when I get hit by the Federal government on this, it's almost like we can't believe you haven't done this. Are you -- I'm actually in a position that it's almost -- I can't say that it is mandated but I have to be turning around and bringing it to the legislature's attention what this is causing and, you know, what they see in terms of national statistics that cause them to put the pressure on us as to why it is that we're still one of the few states that doesn't do this.

REP. MORIN (28TH): And thank you for that and I apologize, I had to step out. Did you mention -- how many states have this ban, do you know?
COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: There's only -- I believe it's 12 right now that do not. Only 12 states are left that do not have this -- have the prohibition on open containers.

REP. MORIN (28TH): And I think it's well-prepared. I was listening, when you were talking about staffing, I think Senator Leone was talking and I've been out of the department for 14-plus years but I'll say this. When I was there, there were a lot more employees than you have right now.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: That's correct.

REP. MORIN (28TH): And we still used consultants.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: That's correct.

REP. MORIN (28TH): They were still a ton of consultants. At the end, you know, I'd get involved in a little bit of selection and such. So you know where I'm gonna be coming from this because I think we should be doing more in-house. I think the people -- and I'll tie it two ways. Not only just design but especially construction inspection.

The people that work for the department, the engineers, your field inspectors -- these people have ownership of the jobs they do. It's that -- they -- they take pride. I'm not saying that the consultants don't.

But when you put somebody that's in a for-profit organization, I don't believe you get the same level of care. You may feel differently but -- so to hear that we -- because of the bunch of people we don't have because it's down to what, 2700 give or take?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Almost three now.
REP. MORIN (28TH): Up to three, that's, I guess, good to hear. My concerns are that in a year-and-a-half, in 2022, there's gonna be a mass exodus of very good smart people.

And I'm gonna just give you this example and I -- when I worked for the department, probably in the early 90s, you know, whenever they -- when Governors used to give the early outs. Everybody used to say, "How many chips am I getting?" Right? Everybody was concerned about that.

The Governor would give these -- governors would give these incentives for people to leave and there would be a period of time when they wouldn't hire. And I think it was about five, six, seven years. And I would sit there and look and we'd see such -- we'd lose the experienced people that were smarter than smart, that knew the -- had institutional knowledge and there was never really a good job, that I could see of helping that next wave.

And that's what I wanna ask. Where are you now because in a year-and-a-half you're gonna lose some really good people and what is the department doing because it's gonna -- I think it's a bad direction if we just say, "Well, that's what we have consulting firms for."

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: No, no. You're not gonna hear me say that because part of what you brought out is the big concern we have.

You know you -- and I'm very, very grateful to the community that's out there, the consulting community and the contractors that are out there because there is a lot of expertise that's out there.
But at the end of the day, the Federal government and you as a legislator here in the state need to know that there's a public eye that's on all that work that is going on out there.

What I have said is that I have a -- I'd like to believe I have a very good relationship with both the contracting sector that's out there and our own unions.

They bring up good points, okay. It's a lot easier in budget crunches to just say we don't hire, okay. And where do we not hire? We do not hire on the state side, not on the contracting side. It's very easy to go and defend the contracting side because you have a contract for it versus when you're asked to make a budget cut. Okay, it comes in to can, you know, we not fill these jobs for a while and that's exactly what you've seen in the past and exactly what I inherited when I came in here.

We're heavily involved with the Governor's office because the Governor's office is acutely aware of what's coming up on 2022. We are meeting regularly as he's put together this entire panel to look at how are we gonna do it. Because it's gone beyond that. The other thing that has happened is for the longest time, I think you -- you know that the people are out there running our plows and everything else.

And I turn around and I use this as an example of efficiency. We've gone from two people and a plow doing a single lane to our latest right now is we have one person in the plow with a computer and they do up to three lanes. We're doing everything we can to be fiduciarily responsible for everything that we do.
But the other end is that, you know, I have to be looking at what it is that we're going to be faced with coming forward and even in terms of getting those people with CDLs, we're now losing them not just to the private sector, these towns are paying up $10 dollars more an hour than we are because of what's happened here, the state, in terms of how we've dealt with, you know, salaries going forward.

So there is a complete study going on. I'm glad that there's other departments of the state that have to come forward and explain these but we're actively involved in it. Yes, I am very concerned and I will tell you when I was at Metro-North it was nice that a lot of the people that had left had gone off into the consulting community so you were able to use them to augment and to help train your new forces coming in but they're not the people that you can keep their maintaining going forward.

So there's a happy balance there that we need to -- and that's -- that's what I've tried to explain here. I'd like to retain the fact that we are very judicious about it and we look at what is the right balance going forward because I'll also be the person that has to come before you to go and explain, "I really need these additional people. This is why I need these additional people and this is why I can't afford to have these cuts at this time."

But right now I want to assure you that we do know what the clip is that we're looking at and we're doing everything we can to look at solutions for dealing with that clip and you'll hear that from other departments, not just from me.
REP. MORIN (28TH): Well, thank you and then you know who, Commissioner, we've worked together, I have no doubt that you're doing the very best you can with the tools you have and that you want to -- you want success just like we all do. I'm encouraged while I'm -- Wethersfield is not the hotbed of mass transit and trains, I do appreciate that the communities you're looking at and expanding the Danbury Line, Waterbury Line, getting train service, get people off the roads, help them get where they need to be faster.

Those are smart investments for the state of Connecticut and I sure hope that we here will see that big picture because oftentimes we get in that parochial vision -- well, if it doesn't affect me, forget it, I'm not gonna jump on board of that.

But it really ties into so many things that you and frankly your staff have been advocating over the last couple years that I'm happy to support those initiatives. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Representative, I'm gonna say that I've gotten that, believe it or not, it hasn't been as parochial as you would think. I've gotten that from a number of the Representatives and Senators who have turned to me and said, "We've got -- we have to raise the tide, okay?" In other words, the sea level has to come up together because it has to work as an integrated system going forward.

So I haven't that parochialism -- there's always gonna be a little bit, okay. [Crosstalk]

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative McCarthy-Vahey.
REP. MCCARTHY-VAHEY (133RD): Thank you very much and I will speak loudly because I do know that there's lots of great volume. Wonderful participation today.

Thank you, Mr. Commissioner and for your colleagues who are here today, thanks very much for exploring the open container law and that $152 million dollars, I would certainly welcome that. And thank you for putting forward the seatbelt initiative which I've been supportive in the past.

My question today is about U-PASS. I'm thrilled to see that the possibility of expanding that program. As someone who represents Fairfield University, one of our finest institutions and also lives in a community -- Sacred Heart. We have University of Bridgeport right nearby.

I wanted to just ask to, you know, to you or whoever it is on your team who might want to answer this. I know Deputy Commissioner Eucalitto referenced the fact that we certainly do subsidize our -- any mass transit route and I appreciate the reminder of that. We -- we absolutely do. We subsidize all of our transportation.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Airlines, roads.

REP. MCCARTY-VAHEY (133RD): Everything, roads. Yes, airlines. All of it. That's what we do, it's one of the core functions of government.

But in terms of the private public piece, I just want to ask you, is that capacity analysis -- and the word fairness was used earlier -- going to be done for the publics who were in the public institutions who were in the system previously. And again, I'm thrilled that we have this program and I
wanna see us continue it but will it be done across the board and not just for the new institutions and the private institutions coming in hopefully.

GARRETT EUCALITTO: Yeah, we have existing agreements with those public universities that generally are not in the capacity constrained area of the New Haven Line, right? You're looking at UConn and Central as the major users of this. And so it's a different type of discretion, I think, when you look at opening up agreements with universities and colleges that are right next to the main New Haven Line, I think, is where that type of analysis is really gonna become important.

I don't think we -- if we reach the point we get all the ridership numbers for the existing university systems and if we reach a point where we're seeing overcapacity issues, I think we'll have -- as we renew those agreements, we'll look at that.

REP. MCCARTY-VAHEY (133RD): So am I correct in saying the answer is really no because you have existing agreements already.

GARRETT EUCALITTO: Not at this time, yes.

REP. MCCARTY-VAHEY (133RD): Okay, thank you for that. And I know -- I just will know I'm thinking about UConn Stamford and I would say proximity-wise, the likelihood of those students using a peak ticket would be much higher than a Yale student, for example, in New Haven. Just in terms of looking at perhaps, you know, those internships.

I would also ask one other quick question if I may, Mr. Chair, thank you, which is do you anticipate that peak usage of five students, whether it is
UConn, Stamford, Yale, Fairfield U, UB -- anyone on the line, would be flooding the market.

And I -- when I'm thinking about this and I'm thinking about the students I know, it's a small subset of students who are going to be commuting by rail to get to an internship. Most students are on campus taking their classes. So is that your anticipation as well?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: I would say that -- I'll take that -- from the standpoint that it was a concern that we wanted to start it off with that the rails side would be in the off-peak because we were a little bit concerned how we might overload it and we did not want to preclude this thing from moving forward.

So that's why I would say to you that it's more likely that we're gonna come back to it in a year or two and go and say how this has worked. We know how it has worked up to now, all right. We know that the students that are there in Stamford that are using it -- it has not caused the problems. I know when -- and that's why I also relate it back to when I was the President of Metro-North -- very concerned about what this was going to do because of how we were trying to deal with not having enough cars and enough seats as it was to be able to know that we were gonna be able to sustain it.

But I will also tell you right now we are at -- where every other rail system in the country is worried about some decline and everything else, we've had -- if we've had any decline at all, it's been one tenth of one percent. So it's not -- you know, we keep growing and growing and growing so we have to keep looking at how are we gonna augment
that going forward. That's why we're going for more cars, that's why we're coming to you for more cars.

So the answer is somewhere in between and that's why we're being judicious when we looked at this because even OPM turned around to go and say, "Wait a minute, how are you gonna control what's gonna go on on the main line because we're moving close."

And that's why we're saying we're looking at that as we're going forward. But we do know what has happened up until this point. We have those numbers.

REP. MCCARTHY-VAHEY (133TH): Great. Thank you so much, Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Representative McGorty. And I'm gonna finish up with Senator Martin.

REP. MCGORTY (122ND): Thank you. Good morning, Commissioner, thank you for coming in today.

I know there's a lot of people, lot of mayors here that wanna talk about the Waterbury Line which is a great project. I'm gonna let them talk on that but I do want to talk to you today briefly about the section 14 for the rail overpass.

Representative -- past Representative Laura Hoydick, now the mayor of Stratford had a sign on the bridge trestle, Everything From Shore to Forest for her town. Now it's covered with another sign from the business from out of town. She's looking to have that basically first ride refusal so the town can advertise themselves or the business that's local to them.
And according to your opposition here it says that your $240,000 dollar a year that you get from that, she's not looking for it for free. So paying a competitive price but just allowing the town to have the first right of refusal, there's two great letters of testimony today, one from herself, Mayor Hoydick, and myself. If you just do some homework and look at that. I won't read it to you but I think you would change your mind on that one.

And thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Senator Martin. And we will then move directly to the public testimony. I will take about four or five members of the public right away and depending on how quickly that goes and then move back to public officials and then back and forth.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner for attending today. I only have a couple questions for you.

So you mentioned the studies. Currently how many -- and specifically, I guess, the million dollar studies that you mentioned earlier. That information that you would need. So how many of those do we have currently ongoing now and I'm not looking for an answer but maybe if you could provide a list of what ongoing studies you have in the pipeline.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Can I specify, are you looking for rail studies, you looking for studies when we're gonna do bridges? What type of studies are you looking for right now?

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): So I guess I'm looking to see what you have in the pipeline regarding the
rails specifically. But I guess if you've got other studies that might be of use to us, I'd be open to seeing those.

And then also, how many do you think -- with what you're hearing now from those here who -- those of us who are showing concerns for the Waterbury Line, I'll use that as an example. How many more do you see that we need going forward regarding -- if it's rail or it's bus or -- so I'd like to see an overall plan, I guess, as to okay, here's what we've got in the pipeline, here's what we're gonna need.

And this leads me to my last request is that could you provide an overall map of the state of Connecticut with your idea -- all right, this is what we have sort of planned --

COMMISSIONER GUILIETTI: Can I free wheel on it? Can I tell you everything that I'd like to put in? Can I put in the service going into the airport?

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Whatever you'd like. But if we could sorta see a visual as to okay, you'd like to do this rail here but you'd also like to do this busway here. I'm just looking to see what your overall plan is for the state of Connecticut.

COMMISSIONER GUILIETTI: What you should take comfort in and I pointed it out when we started off that, you know, you saw John Bernick here before, you've got Garrett here, you've got Mark here.

We have been looking at where it is that we still have rail capacity, we have lines. I've been asked by every area around here that has any sort of a rail line, is there a possibility of utilizing that rail line?
Mark, I see you're ready to put your finger on the thing so I'm gonna let you weigh in on this one. Go ahead.

MARK ROLFE: Senator, I just offer to you we do have a long-range plan that outlines in some degree of detail the priorities that we see going forward. I think recent events have caused us to maybe retarget, refocus some of that. But the long-range plan for the department is a published document and we can share that with you.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): And I guess just one last question, sorry. So regarding the providing trains -- a train set -- I heard in the meeting that we had in Waterbury -- Naugatuck, actually -- regarding the wait time for producing trains. Can you just share with the public that information?

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Yeah, generally speaking, when you're buying a car and you're designing and buying the car, it's gonna take you about four years. Four to five years before that car is actually delivered to you. That's across the industry. That's why we're also looking right now to go and procure any used sets that are out there that can buy us time while those cars are being developed.

So but I don't want to get anybody's expectations up that once you pass this bill that within a year or two you're gonna see cars. One of the problems with that and we just met with the Federal government on it -- there's no manufacturers that are truly dedicated here in the United States for rail cars. So we're constantly having to work out deals where they put in a plant and it's for a very specific type of building.
And we've been talking to the FRA about whether or not we can start standardizing nationwide how we do these railcar procurements so we can keep a steady stream going and attract more companies to open up businesses here for rail cars. So there is a specific reason why it takes that long.

You know, I don't -- I don't know any way of accelerating it right now no matter what promises you see out there, until we get some changes that are put in, including I'm asking for changes in terms of some of the weight bearing that we have to put into our cars because of so many accidents, we're now putting in the safest system that we know of there that designs to keep trains from hitting each other instead of designing trains to be able to absorb an impact with each other.

So the answer is four to five years from when you put the order in to when those first cars start rolling out and the other end of it is we're doing everything we can to look at -- can we pick up some other cars in which case I'll be coming to you for a budget that allows me to go and lease some additional cars until we can get those new cars here.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you again.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you so much for your testimony today. I thank you to the staff who has joined the Commissioner as well and help provide a lot of information, a lot of answers on a lot of topics far beyond just what you submitted for consideration today.

As you know, we have a hearing again on Friday, I think there's some issues of DOT concern on there.
Maybe your presence won't be necessary for that but maybe submitted testimony. Similarly, on March 2nd there may be some issues we'll ask you to take a look at some of the bills on our agenda and provide input where you can.

As always, extend to every member, if you have questions or concerns, please see they're forwarded to me. Alicia or Pam with DOT will get all this information back out to you Committee members and on our website so the public will have full access to it.

Thank you again, Commissioner, for your time today.

COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: And thank you again for the acknowledgement. This is the second time staff was acknowledged and I really have to point out I truly feel as a Commissioner, I've been extremely fortunate to have a staff that on average has over 30 years of experience. They come in, they're well-disciplined and they provide the background and it's extremely nice to know that people know that there is a team here at the DOT that's willing to work with you on everything. Thank you.


COMMISSIONER GIULIETTI: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR: We're gonna move on to the public now. We're gonna take Rob Greenbaum followed by Charles Hunter and Ben Shaiken. And we'll move back to public officials at that point.

Rob and to folks testifying in the public, if you are distracted by any noise in the audience, feel free to stop at that time. It will not count
against your three minutes. There -- we've gotten some clearance that the text will be able to drown out most of that in the background so in the future you want your recording or access your point, it will be centered on the microphone and it not pick up much of the background noise.

But if you or anyone is feeling distracted by outside noise, feel free to stop for a second, pause and it will not count against your time.

With that, we try to keep testimony to three minutes. If you're in the middle of a point, feel free to continue that point and I'll provide guidance for exceeding the common courtesy that we extend everyone.

So thank you and with that, please push the button to begin your testimony with your name and affiliation. Thank you.

ROB GREENBAUM: Rob Greenbaum, STAR Inc. Good afternoon, esteemed members of the Transportation Committee and audience. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

My name is Rob Greenbaum and I'm the Director of Operations for Norwalk-based STAR Inc. Lighting the Way.

STAR was established in 1952 by parents who believed that children with developmental disabilities were entitled to the same basic opportunities in their community as other children.

Today the organization has grown to include a full array of services for individuals with disabilities and their families from birth to their senior years.
STAR and our colleague organizations create opportunities for individuals to live full lives with independence, freedom of choice and personal growth by providing support services and advocacy.

We inform and encourage the community to recognize and appreciate the value of all individuals. Our collective goal is the inclusion of all individuals with disabilities in their community.

Annually STAR's fleet of vehicles completes over 6,900 trips covering approximately 500,000 miles bringing participants to and from jobs, activities and appointments.

I'm here today to express STAR's support for the language added to Section 13 regarding nonprofit service vehicles regaining use of the Merritt Parkway and Wilbur Cross Highway.

I thank the Committee for allowing me to highlight the importance of this initiative as we were one of several organizations that support individuals who would benefit from this opportunity.

We urge you to include the Merritt Parkway and Wilbur Cross as highways available to our vehicles, drivers and therefore to our extended family members and special needs -- family members with special needs and disabilities no matter what abilities we all might have.

Thank you for the consideration.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Rob, for your testimony and coming here on behalf of the many people you serve. You should know that Representative Devlin brought that to the attention of this committee earlier this year. We think we've
worked out some language that would help accommodate the needs of you and your sister organizations.

I thank you for reaching out to the committee and you should thank Representative Devlin for her advocacy on your behalf.

ROB GREENBAUM: Thank you so much.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): There's a question. Representative Devlin followed by Senator Haskell.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I also want to give credit to Representative Rutigliano who has brought this forward in the past as well.

Can you just speak to -- and so what we're asking, I think, is that it's -- there are certain vehicles of the same size that your organization utilizes that are on the parkway but one and -- I guess the second class would be what I would call a mini school bus, I don't know the technical term.

But is there anything bigger than a 15-passenger van that you would be utilizing on the parkway?

ROB GREENBAUM: Not our organization, no.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So the vehicles that you do drive don't have any restriction in terms of the bridge height, any sort of physical dimensions that would cause a problem with the parkway.

ROB GREENBAUM: Correct, not our vehicles.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Would there be any type of cost savings for your nonprofit organization?

ROB GREENBAUM: Sure, certainly. I mean it expedites getting our participants to and from the
activities or the locations they need to go to so, you know, being able to use our roads all the time certainly would be a benefit. And a cost benefit.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay, great. And thank you very much, I don't have any further questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just a -- kind of not a question, I'd be remiss if I didn't applaud the remarkable work of STAR. I'm so grateful to represent a community in which your team operates and I want to thank Representative Devlin for bringing this bill to our attention because I'll truly be supporting it if it further enables you to do the wonderful work that you do. So thank you very much.

ROB GREENBAUM: Thank you and I'm -- and I'm here on behalf of our organization but certainly the wider organization and also by -- from invitation by the Kennedy Center and Mary Pat. So I appreciate that. Thank you so much for the opportunity.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Rob, and thank you for spending your time with us today.

Charles Hunter followed by Ben Shaiken.

CHARLES HUNTER: Good afternoon, members of the Committee. My name's Charles Hunter, I'm the Assistant Vice President of Government Affairs for Genesee and Wyoming. We own the Providence and Worcester Railroad. And I'm also the Chairman of the Connecticut Railroad Association.
So I'm wearing two hats today and I have two brief items of testimony, one from the railroad and one from the association.

I'll start out with the Railroad Association. The Connecticut Railroad Association is a membership-based organization that represents the eight freight railroads here in our state. We operate on track and rights-of-way owned or leased for the purpose of transporting freight for various Connecticut businesses.

In regard to Section 14 relative to the advertising signs on rail overpasses, these signs represent an important secondary means of income to the Connecticut Freight Railroads which are primarily short line carriers that serve the local Connecticut businesses across the state.

The income derived from these signs provides an important secondary means of income and supplements the revenue derived from the freight transportation activities, primarily freight and switching.

We are primarily focused on serving customers that are not usually large volume shippers so the additional income from these signs is important for these railroads.

There are existing signs located on our rail overpasses. These signs are in some cases under long-term agreements between various railroads and their clients. If the law is enacted, we ask that existing sign locations be permanently grandfathered.

So that's it on that one. Would you like me to go ahead and move to the second? Okay.
The Providence and Worcester Railroad, the P&W is a short line railroad that operates on track and rights-of-way owned or leased for the purpose of transporting freight to and from various Connecticut businesses.

Regarding Section 4 relative to creating a new at-grade public railroad grade crossing, this segment of the P&W Middletown branch is owned by the state of Connecticut and our P&W rights are limited to rail operation and rights of entry.

There appears to be visibility issues at this newly proposed open public crossing at Portland Street which is currently gated and used only for emergency purposes. The visibility issues may be partially addressed by clearing existing vegetation and installing signalization with gates at the crossing.

This proposed project to potentially increase P&W's risk exposure by routing public traffic over a crossing that was originally intended solely for EmergiTel vehicle access.

The public benefits for the project seem to be questionable. P&W would like to work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to resolve the railroad safety concerns surrounding this proposed public crossing at-grade.

Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Hunter, for your testimony on both issues. And for speaking on behalf of the Connecticut Railroad Association. Really appreciate it. Are there questions for Mr. Hunter? Senator Leone.
SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Hunter, for your comments.

Just quick on the proposal for the public crossing at Portland Street that you mentioned.

CHARLES HUNTER: Yes, sir.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): I know the Commissioner who just spoke previously, many times when these kind of proposals come up and you heard us ask about studies and so forth. I know safety is always a major concern so you're bringing up this -- the fact that there might be a visibility concern.

CHARLES HUNTER: Yes.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): So have you had conversations with DOT regarding this? Because even if this is a proposal, it's not gonna happen any time soon until the proper studies and justifications are done but I want to make sure that your organization or you are speaking with the Commissioner and if you have, what has been the type of feedback that you've gotten?

CHARLES HUNTER: We have had some initial conversations. I think Steve's actually here today. Steve and I have spoken about this. We had a conference call on this. So we have had some initial dialog but we're not to our comfort zone, I guess you could say, on this item yet.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): But the discussions are ongoing?

CHARLES HUNTER: Yes.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): So as long as the communication is open, I think that's a good thing.
and just keep us informed as it progresses and we'll see where it goes.

CHARLES HUNTER: Okay, thank you.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you.


BEN SHAIKEN: Hi, how are you. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Senator Leone, Representative Devlin, Senator Martin and distinguished members of the committee. My name's Ben Shaiken, I'm a Manager of Advocacy of Public Policy of the Connecticut Community on Profit Alliance or The Alliance.

We're the statewide trade association for community nonprofits. As you all know, I'm sure, community nonprofits provide essential services in every city and town in Connecticut serving about half a million people in need and employing about 117,000 people in Connecticut, about 12 percent of our workforce.

They're an important part of what makes Connecticut a great place to live and work and an important part of our economy. You have my testimony so I'm here to support, as my friend from STAR, Incorporated was just before, Section 13 of Senate Bill 151 which would allow nonprofit service buses and other vehicles owned by nonprofits or leased by them to travel on the Merritt Parkway and the Wilbur Cross Highway.

I don't spend a lot of time in front of the Transportation Committee, I've worked in this
building for a better part of a decade and this is my first time in front of the Transportation Committee so it's good to see so many of you who I work with on other committees but this is an opportunity, I will say, for this committee to make actual meaningful difference for nonprofits who are located and serve the areas adjacent to the Wilbur Cross Highway and the Merritt Parkway, providing significant cost savings, I think, for many of them who are now spending additional time and fuel which is -- which all costs money -- traveling around those roads.

There's no safety or traffic concern or risk with allowing these vehicles on those roads and so I strongly urge the committee to support it going forward. So as the service system has evolved in Connecticut, nonprofits now, many of them own, as you just heard, pretty substantial fleets of vehicles and they use them to transport clients to and from work and home and medical appointments and day programs all day.

Many of these vehicles are just passenger vehicles, minivans that may be outfitted to be handicap accessible or just regular passenger vehicles. Some are sort of service -- service buses that are a little bit larger but again and as spelled out in this language, none that would pose any risk to bridge height on the Merritt Parkway.

And this is an opportunity for you to take a step that doesn't cost the state any money to save nonprofits money and reduce some of the burdens that -- that faced them in, you know, years and years and years of tight budget cuts and flat or cut funding from the state.
So thank you very much, I urge you to support Section 13 of Senate Bill 151.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Shaiken, for your testimony today and for speaking on behalf of The Alliance and broadening the voices that we're hearing on this issue and helping us understand the impact that it’s had on nonprofits servicing in the area and the opportunity for this moving forth. I really appreciate it.

BEN SHAIKEN: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Are there any questions for Ben? Seeing none, thank you again.

BEN SHAIKEN: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Mike Riely popped in. Representative Rutigliano, I do see you. We just went way over the hour with public officials, we're trying to get the members of the public up.

Mike Riely and then followed by the four individuals I mentioned.

MIKE RIELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee. I'm Mike Riely representing the Naugatuck Railroad and this ain't my first time testifying before the Transportation Committee.

The Naugatuck Railroad is a 20-mile line owned by the Railroad Museum of New England that operates excursions between Waterbury and Torrington and also has a growing freight business moving construction debris and demolition material from a collection place in Watertown to -- connecting to the overall grid where that stuff is moved to Ohio.
We're here for two purposes. One is to indicate our full support for the proposal for the Waterbury Rail Line which is our lifeline to the rest of the rail network. We want to support the proposals that are embodied in LCL 1588 which I'm sure the Committee is aware of.

Freight rail is an important part of that corridor as well. There used to be dozens and dozens of trains that went through Waterbury every day bringing in raw materials and taking out finished products. The Naugatuck Rail System maintains a very good line, 20 miles.

And the other thing I wanted to point out to you is that this committee last year approved the bill that they sent to Finance, that you sent to Finance, that would authorize $20 million dollars for a freight rail improvement plan.

The Finance Committee in its wisdom moved forward with that bill at $10 million dollars, it was included in the Bond Act and it is still in the Bond Act so Senate Bill 12, Section 64 is that $10 million dollars that you guys were so good about providing last year.

It's competitive proposals from the eight or nine freight rail operations currently in Connecticut and it's to do freight rail improvements. Those are the short lines that provide that last mile, first mile coverage and we hope that in your workings in this area that you continue to support Senate Bill 12, Section 64 which is the reinstatement of the Freight Rail Improvement Plan which was very successful before and we'll tell you more about that at a later date.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Riely and thank you for your continued advocacy. One of the good benefits of having both myself and my Senate Co-Chair and as well as the ranking members both on the Finance Committee is to continue to push for transportation priorities internal to that. And it was a bipartisan good approach and it should have been $20 million dollars and we were upset that it got knocked down to $10 million.

MIKE RIELEY: I'm getting verklempt. [Laughter]

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Riely, any questions? Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): First time I've heard you say the word verklempt in all the years I've been listening to you testify here before this committee but it's good to see you [Laughter].

MIKE RIELEY: I know some Yiddish.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): It's good to see you. Thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Meghan McGeary, Lucylle Armentano, Kelly Backes, Hao Xing. If I pronounced any of those names incorrectly, please feel free to correct me on the record.

After that we're gonna go back to the public officials record with Representative Rutigliano.

LUCYLLE ARMENTANO: Thank you Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, members of the Committee. I'm Lucylle Armentano, I'm the Chair of the Graduate Student Assembly at Yale.

MEGHAN MCGEARY: I'm Meghan McGeary, I'm the Chair of the Security Committee of the GSA at Yale.
KELLY BACKES: I'm Kelly Backes and I'm Chair of the Student Advocacy Committee for the Graduate and Professional Student Senate at Yale.

HAO XING: My name is Hao Xing and I'm the President of the GPS at Yale.

KELLY BACKES: So we're pleased to speak on behalf on Graduate and Professional Students at Yale University in support of S.B.151.

A program like you have U-PASS has many benefits to students at private universities at Yale and we'll reflect on a few of those here today.

So most graduate and professional students at Yale live, eat and socialize in neighborhoods directly adjacent to campus but they're eager to explore greater kind of catch.

However, commuting from neighboring towns such as Hamden as I do can be challenging for many because this generally requires a car and campus parking is prohibitively expensive.

Affordable access to CT transit buses would allow students to live and participate in these communities more readily and 65 percent of students reported to us that they would use public transit if provided an affordable pass.

Students would have the options of living in neighborhoods with more affordable rent, better access to child care or a partner's job and this would encourage students to utilize public transportation which would reduce our reliance on cars and ride shares and support the development of environmentally friendly habits.
MEGHAN MCGEARY: As a lifelong resident of Connecticut, I know well the wealth of resources our state has to offer. Unfortunately, our income is limited and without a car it's challenging to travel outside of New Haven and enjoy these resources.

Further, many perspective students decide against moving to Connecticut and often settle for institutions in Massachusetts or California where public transportation is more student friendly.

A program like the U-Pass would enable us to travel around the state accessing needed resources like mental health and dental care that are saturated in New Haven.

We could more easily contribute to a broader Connecticut economy and culture by shopping at local businesses and commuting to participate in government in Hartford as we have here today.

This means that my classmates and I will be able to put roots down in Connecticut and invest our time and energy in the state during what could be upwards of five to seven years of school an ultimately this will support us in staying here after we graduate.

LUCYLLLE ARMENTANO: A program like U-PASS offers students greater access to academic work and internship opportunities which are critical to our career and job prospects. Expanded and affordable access to public transportation will allow students to commute to internships and interviews around the state.

For students in clinical programs such as nursing or medicine, the -- this makes it easier to accept rotations at clinics outside the Yale New Haven
Health System like the VA Hospitals right here in Connecticut. Or Hartford.

Law students would be able to travel to and from the capitol to interview for appellate courtship. Art students could increasingly collaborate with the state's many galleries and performance bases.

Finally, Citizens would have better access to libraries, other academic institutions and field sites -- field sites around the state.

HAO XING: Yale students also realize their skills and expertise for community engagement efforts such as providing medical care to underserved populations, tutoring and outreach at local public schools and teaching incarcerated students.

The ability to affordable travel to neighborhoods with Bingham and beyond New Haven, for law students to better explore and contribute to the many vibrant communities across the state.

So for these reasons, we support S.B. 151 which would increase student access to critical resources, for them to engage with the border -- broader Connecticut community and reduce our collective carbon footprint and also retain us as Connecticut citizens after we graduate. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you for your testimony today, for coming up. Even I take the train up from New Haven almost every day so I'm glad to see you folks up here. And for committee members who, you know, we always implore folks to give your testimony but also help us out with something on the background.
These students have conducted studies and analysis of surrounding institutions. The number of potential individuals who would likely utilize the U-PASS to the level of subsidies that exist at such -- at such states surrounding us and how they would hope to implement utilization at Yale University.

So I thank you both for your testimony today and coming up here and joining us. The obvious level of effort that you've put into this both on campus and other personal time over the last year to develop this proposal. So thank you for everything you've done in that regard. Are there questions? Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I want to also applaud everyone for your efforts in coming up. It's always good to have students give us their perspective because sometimes we are always thinking that way and it's just good to get a reminder. So thank you.

The one question I have to you, you're all leaders of your organizations as Chairs and President. So before I get a chance to actually read your testimony, which I'll do in a minute, how large is your organization, how many students do you represent and have you worked with other organizations that are also in support of this?

HAO XING: Yeah, so Graduate and Professional Center is representing all 8,000 graduate and professional students. So non-Yale college students we represent.

MEGHAN MCGEARY: And I went -- the Graduate Student Assembly represents the graduate student population so there's about 3500 of us. But I would also say
that we have spoken with the Yale College Council which represents the Yale undergraduates. So we've interacted with them on this issue as well.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): And have they -- are they in support, have they officially made a comment or general support?

MEGHAN MCGEARY: They haven't officially made a comment but one of their priorities this year is about transit outside of New Haven.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Well, thank you again very much for your efforts and your comments, it's very helpful to the committee. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Seeing no other questions, thank you so much for your testimony and for your work leading up to this. This is very well received by the committee.

YALE STUDENTS: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative Rutigliano followed by Representative Rebimbas who is joined by Mayor O'Leary and Mayor Hess.

REP. RUTIGLIANO (123RD): Good afternoon, Chairman Lemar, Chairman Leone, ranking members Martin and Devlin. I was smiling at you folks, I thought you were agreeing with Section 13 of the transportation bill, not that I was trying to push you along.

I'm here with Mary Pat Decarlo of the Kennedy Center. The Kennedy Center is located in Trumbull and it's one of the largest most highly regarded community rehabilitation centers in our entire state. They support the special needs of infants, children, teens, adults, seniors who have
intellectual and developmental and mental health and physical and other disabilities.

They also are involved in employment opportunities for these folks and they have a transportation division which needs access which would improve their -- would improve their access if they were able to drive on the Merritt Parkway, something that they were able to do up until 1999.

MARY PAT DECARLO: Thank you. The Kennedy Center has been --

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Sorry, hold on -- just for the record, Mary Pat, could you say your name and affiliation for the record.

MARY PAT DECARLO: Sure. My name is Mary Pat Decarlo and I am the Vice President of Programming at the Kennedy Center in Trumbull.

The Kennedy Center presently serves 2400 individuals, as Representative said, anywhere from birth to seniors.

To provide individuals, to -- there -- a lot of individuals have difficulty getting to and from our day programs. We presently have 30 day programs throughout the state. Many of these individuals live in home and the families don't have the capacity to transport.

Presently, we transport over 350 individuals a day. We have 14 and 15-passenger service vans. We use 8-passenger vans and we use multiple what I call high-top vehicles which are wheel chair vehicles.

Right now, none of those types of vehicles are allowed to go on the Merritt or the Wilbur Cross Parkway. We have many individuals that are on the
vehicles for over an hour-and-a-half each way on a
given day. Many of these people have anxiety
disorders, they're very medically complex or
behaviorally involved.

The Department of Developmental Services does not
provide us with staff on the van so it's the driver
to 14 individuals. So this makes for a very long
day for many of those individuals because the route
that drivers have to take makes it that much longer.

We have an individual who lives in our group home in
Hamden who just started the day program in
Wallingford. Now if he was able to get onto the
Wilbur Cross Parkway, he'd be there in 15 minutes.
Now it takes 35 to 40 minutes and this man is
severely physically disabled and is in a wheelchair
and the prolonged time in a wheelchair is just not
good for him.

I personally commute the Merritt Parkway every day
and I'm always seeing the mini school buses,
commercial vehicles that are as tall as we are --
our handicapped vans are -- and have stacks and
stacks of ladders on them.

So I really don't understand the difference between
the vehicles and why we are limited to using 95 and
the back roads. So any assistance you can give us
with this would be greatly appreciated.

REP. RUTIGLIANO (123RD): Thank you. We're
available for any questions.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative
Rutigliano and Mary Pat for your testimony today.
Representative, you were highlighted for helping to
bring this up in the past. Representative Devlin
did a great job earlier this year. So illustrating
this conversation for us in more direct terms and ensuring that we got this today and put into the DOT's actual bill itself. And you will be saluted as well as Representative Dublin for your advocacy getting us to this point where it's actually part of the package.

REP. RUTIGLIANO (123RD): We appreciate that.

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

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Always a delight to see you, Representative Rutigliano and Mary Pat, thank you so much for making the effort to come up here and share your testimony with the committee.

Could you just speak a little bit to the service area that the Kennedy Center operates within? You mentioned Wallington. You're headquartered in Trumbull.

MARY PAT DECARLO: Right.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): You have multiple group homes, your day programs, you just mentioned Hamden and Wallingford. Can you speak to the area that you serve?

MARY PAT DECARLO: So we have 16 residential programs going as far up as Hamden down to Fairfield and everything in between. So between Milford, Stratford, Trumbull, Bridgeport. We have day programs in all of those areas. We have individuals who need to go just from Stratford to Woodbridge for day program or we have people from Hamden going down to Stratford or to our Trumbull program.
We have individuals who live in the family homes and they live in Norwalk, Westport, Wilton. So our inability to use the Merritt leads us to 95 -- which we all know what 95 can be like at 8:00, 9:00 o'clock in the morning and then 4:00 in the afternoon -- which prolongs people's travel times.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So alternatively as you mentioned then, you're using the back roads which would extend the trips or in many cases no way a direct route to where you're trying to get to.

MARY PAT DECARLO: Exactly. And also, you know, our ongoing costs of staff time, gasoline, service to the vehicles.

REP. RUTIGLIANO (123RD): We looked back into the history of this with the Kennedy Center and it seems that up until 1999 they were allowed access to these highways. We're not sure why it stopped but we're hoping we can get it reactivated.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): And so the vehicles that your organization does use, none would exceed 15 passengers.

MARY PAT DECARLO: Correct.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): And I know what you mean about certain vehicles, I've -- while driving -- snapped a few pictures to show our committee chairs, like "Well, look, this is on the parkway. This is on the parkway."

But the mini school buses have been exempted and I know there's probably a more technical term but they're the smaller yellow school buses -- have been exempted to be able to travel and none of your
vehicles would even probably reach that -- that size.

MARY PAT DECARLO: No, or be slightly smaller than that.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay, all right. And we've heard about financial impact that this could positively have. Anything you could speak to in that regard? Alliance did speak on it a little bit but from the Kennedy Center?

MARY PAT DECARLO: Well, in general, the Kennedy Center has lost money in the area of transportation for at least the last ten years. The Department of Developmental Services pays us a set rate based on miles. But that's -- that's GPS and as the crow flies, it doesn't take into account that we can't take the Merritt [crosstalk].

Exactly, so with the rates that we're reimbursed, it's usually not sufficient.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, I don't have any further questions but do appreciate you both being here.

MARY PAT DECARLO: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Yes and thank you both again and we may be in contact to get -- I'm reading through the opposition that DOT has submitted. Part of it centers on they wanna make sure these exemptions are tight and they are very applicable to the very specific vehicles that we had in mind and we don't open up the door to exploitation or creating exemptions so broad that many other types of vehicles that we don't intend to allow on the parkway are allowed.
So we may need to be in contact with you or your transportation directors to help us really clearly narrowly define the exemptions so we can move this forward.

So I appreciate your testimony today but also your willingness to respond to some phone calls that we might have [crosstalk].

MARY PAT DECARLO: Absolutely, any help we can be.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): I appreciate it. Representative Rebimbas with Mayor O'Leary and Mayor Hess. And apparently 19 other mayors and first selectmen have signed on to everything Representative Rebimbas is gonna tell us.

So Representative and Mayor, it's in our notes that you're speaking on behalf of like half of the state. So you've been entrusted with something here. I hope you guys can live up to the expectations here.

{Laughter}

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you very much and good afternoon, Chairman, Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, Vice Chair Senator Bergstein and Representative Simms. Ranking members Senator Martin and Representative Devlin. And members of the Transportation Committee.

Thank you for raising Senate Bill 155. My name is State Representative Rosa Rebimbas, I do represent the 70th District, the beautiful borough of Naugatuck and I'm also co-chair of the Waterbury Rail Line caucus along with Senator Hartley, Senator Logan and State Representative Reyes.

On behalf of our caucus and bipartisan efforts of legislators and leaders from 19 different cities and
towns along the Naugatuck Valley Rail Line, I ask that you consider incorporating our language from LCL 1588 into this bill as you hopefully voted out of this committee.

A lot of time and money has already been invested into the Waterbury Rail Line and we hope that you will see it fit to assist us in continuing to invest in what will ultimately be a catalyst for an economic boom for the state of Connecticut as a whole through smart transit-oriented development along the Naugatuck Valley Rail Line.

Because we are limited in time and we all respect your time as committee members, we have chosen to consolidate our testimonies here today and will be happy -- you'll be happy to know that not all 19 leaders and respective Representatives and Senators will be testifying individually.

We have submitted testimony and we have also incorporated the LCL language that had been previously submitted as well.

With your indulgence, I would like to ask the town leaders, legislators and other various organization leaders that are here today in the room to please stand to allow the committee to see the number of people that we have present.

And we do have, unfortunately, several other leaders that did have to return back to their respective towns to conduct their businesses and other legislators who have other committee meetings.

Thank you everyone for being here. I hope that certainly -- I would like to take this opportunity now to introduce the two town leaders that will be speaking on everyone's behalf.
We have with us Mayor Neil O'Leary, the mayor of the city of Waterbury and Chairman of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments and Mayor Pete Hess, mayor of the Borough of Naugatuck and Chairman of the Waterbury Rail Working Group.

We also have in the room with us, Rick Dunn, who is the Executive Director of the Naugatuck Valley COG who will be available also to any -- answer any detailed questions that the mayors may not be able to respond.

So once again, thank you very much to your committee for raising this proposal.

MAYOR NEIL O'LEARY: Good afternoon. Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, all the members of the Transportation Committee, I'm Neil O'Leary, as Representative Rebimbas pointed out and to my right is Mayor Pete Hess from Naugatuck.

We accept -- we thank you for accepting our written statement in favor of Senate Bill 155. Out of respect for the Committee's time, we're trying to -- Pete and I are trying to present to you but I think it's important to take just a moment to recognize the elected officials that are here on this amazingly important subject to the Naugatuck Valley.

From Ansonia we have Mayor Dave Cassetti. From Derby Mayor Rich Dziekan. Mayor Hess is here as I mentioned. Seymour First Selectman Kurt Miller. Shelton, Mayor Mark Lauretti, Thomason First Selectman Ed Mone, Beacon Falls First Selectman Gerard Smith. Wolcott Mayor Thomas Dunn. Torrington, Elinor Carbone, Mayor.

We will summarize our testimony for you and outline reasons why the proposed Waterbury Rail Line
Improvement Program is the single most important infrastructure project impacting the Naugatuck Valley region. And in our opinion, one of the most important to the state of Connecticut.

The economic and quality of life benefits it would bring to our region are immense. This is important enough to get all these mayors and first selectpersons from our region here today on short notice to urge your support.

Our proposal includes immediate expansion with existing released equipment. Add a morning and an evening peak-trains can be done as signals go online in 2021.

I will point out to you that the last time a morning train was added to the line ridership went up 34 percent. The state has already -- and we're very grateful -- already invested about $90 million dollars for a new traffic control system with a positive train control and passing signs but has not yet been able to commit to equipment and service increases to take advantage of that investment.

We need to finish the work started by the CTBLT and take full advantage of that already invested $90 million dollars. We lack the number of trains needed in peak commute times. The biggest fear of passengers is missing a connection. If you miss a connection, you'll wait two hours or more for the next train.

On-time performance is also poor and the existing equipment is unreliable and in poor condition. These conditions severely hinder ridership and commuters can't rely on the Waterbury Rail Line to get to work. Mayor Hess?
MAYOR PETE HESS: Thank you, Mayor O'Leary, thank you for giving us this opportunity.

I listened with great interest to your previous questions and comments and I'm gonna take the liberty of deviating from my prepared remarks but don't get nervous, it's all good -- because there are some main distinctions between all the other rail projects in the state of Connecticut and the Waterbury Branch Line.

And in particular, I was listening, you know, the Danbury Branch Line. We would give anything to have service anywhere near comparable to the Danbury Branch Line. They have TOD, they have the benefits of Transit Oriented Development. They can go somewhere and get back.

On the Waterbury Branch Line, the connections aren't there. If you miss it, you're done. There's not any opportunity to have a real transit oriented development project in the valley.

Now that's number one. But number two, the project has already been started. We don't need to study it; this has already been studied five times. The study said we should have what we're asking for. You've already invested $90 million dollars for positive train control, for signalization and for sightings so we can actually have two-way traffic.

Your investment is totally wasted if we don't have the trains. We -- we can't make it happen. We can't have TOD; we can't have what everyone else has without the train cars.

So that's one of the major distinctions between the Waterbury Branch Line and all the other railroad projects that you're listening to.
Also, remember that the Waterbury Branch Line is also a little different because we take care of many people who live in Connecticut and work in Connecticut. We do have the New York connection to some extent which will get immensely larger if this project happens but most of our riders go from say Waterbury, Naugatuck, to Bridgeport, Fairfield, Stamford, where they work and live and go -- try and go back and forth.

So it's a different set of -- of commuters. And it makes a difference and they're struggling now just to be in Connecticut. So it's a totally different project.

Now the second thing I think that's a major thing that distinguishes our project from all the other projects and, you know, we would like to say -- and I've been quoted -- the gold is in the valley. Well, what does that mean? What it means is that the available land is in the valley.

In our written testimony, we reference 253 acres that are within a half-mile radius of the five or six train stations on the line. That is massively more than anything on the other lines that's available for development. When I say development, I mean new development. New residential, new next year's projects that bring in new and more revenue.

So available land -- that's just within the half-mile radius. In Naugatuck, we have 100 acres right on the rail line that are available for development right now. Now that combines our passenger train project and our freight train project that I'm not gonna talk about today be we're gonna come back and talk about that and I invite you all to come to Naugatuck to see it.
But we've got the land. What is the land? It was the former Uniroyal Chemical, the largest chemical company in the world and the Uniroyal footwear division, sneakers, US Keds, you know. So all those manufacturing uses are gone. The town has taken control of the land. We own it, we're ready to go, we have developers knocking on the door but the project that we can do is a thousand times better if we have -- which you all have -- an opportunity to have frequent and reliable train service.

So I think that those are the two things that make the Waterbury Branch Line different from rail in general in the state of Connecticut.

And we're here to ask not for something immediate, we're asking for incremental improvements. We recognize your fiscal constraints. You have the ability through RFRA to get the Federal funding. You don't need the money for four or five years. It takes four to five years as we just heard, to get the train cars. You don't need the money now.

So let's do it incrementally. Let's also get some additional service right now. We can have one more train in the morning, one more train in the evening. Now when they mentioned previously that 34 percent increase from one train, that's one train in the morning knowing that you might not even get back in the afternoon.

If we can get back in the afternoon, we're gonna do great and the gold is not just in the valley, we're gonna have a gold rush, we're gonna generate revenue. That revenue will help you solve all your other problems and I'll be back with our freight rail project to tell you how to solve some more problems.
So thank you for having us.

MAYOR NEIL O'LEARY: And I just would like to finish up with two -- two facts.

In 2013 the city of Waterbury, with our Federal delegation applied for a TIGER grant through the USDOT. You know, everyone said it was our first TIGER grant application, there was no way we were gonna get it, we spent a lot of time on it and basically we -- how we prepared for the TIGER grant was to show the increased ridership along the Waterbury Rail Line and then we went all the way down to the valley but we also included all the way up to Torrington.

And we were awarded the grant. It was a $13 million dollar grant to build a TLD district around the Waterbury Train Station which is about, oh, 60 percent complete right now. It's already brought amazing growth to the city of Waterbury in terms of grand list growth, real estate interest in that area.

And you know, I point that out to you because I think that the US DOT, or I was told the US DOT recognized that the Waterbury Branch Line is a viable branch line for continued growth in the valley.

You know, we have all the local Representatives and Senators here from both sides of the aisle. And the truth is, I think that this one of those moments in time when we can actually have a bipartisan moment and get going in a direction that not only is going to be so incredibly fortunate for the Naugatuck Valley but it's also gonna be fortunate for the state of Connecticut.
And by the way, our workforce in the valley is amazing. And the truth is, is that many of the employers are still manufacturers which continues to be the backbone of the economy not only for Waterbury but the valley as well.

And so many, as Mayor Hess mentioned, little known fact is there are so many riders who come in from Bridgeport to Waterbury, to Shelton, to Derby, to Ansonia -- to work in manufacturing facilities. And we know that there's a shortage there and this would make it that much easier if we could have more service just for those people to take advantage of what we're trying to do here.

So I -- we are very grateful for your time and you know, we'll be happy to answer any questions if we can and provide you any other additional materials in addition to our testimony.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you very much, Mayor Hess and Mayor O'Leary for your testimony and spending some time here and Representative Rebimbas for your leadership on the -- what is it, the Bipartisan Waterbury Rail Council? Am I getting the -- whatever -- thank you for your leadership on that issue and I really do appreciate you helping to organize so many people to be here? I know you're all taking a lot of time to come up here and spend this day with us.

I do appreciate how important it is for every one of your towns. I think you have a committee that similar to use what we use in the Waterbury Rail and knows the importance of the investment there.

And it was about a couple weeks ago when we were sitting around in leadership trying to determine
what do we do with these requests? Just a pause for the session to try and understand what the lay of the land is, to go back, try to figure out what our funding constraints are gonna look like, how do we reassess everything if we knew we weren't gonna get tolling done, for example, this year.

And we decided to like just pause for the year. Representative Reyes, you should be thanking him the way we thank Representative Devlin. The four of you guys should be thanking Representative Reyes because he made it very clear to me in a few phone calls that we would go forward with this bill and we would hear this issue at the session.

So I appreciate your time and effort here but be thankful of Representative Reyes as well. Anyway Representative Reyes, I'll turn it over to you.

REP. REYES (75TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair and before I actually go into my comments I'd actually like to thank the transportation leadership. I know that you have many bills before you and major time crunch in what you're trying to do. But I think that not only for this corridor, not only for the Naugatuck Valley corridor but I think that the state of Connecticut, the rail infrastructure itself is -- could use a shot in the arm and the -- that particular corridor, Naugatuck Valley Corridor has been lagging for many, many years and Senator Hartley has been certainly leading the charge and we'll be hearing from the good Senator pretty soon.

I think that what's going down in this conversation, all the good things that the two Senators -- that the two mayors have mentioned are all things that are good things for the region but what's forgotten
here is many people are not wearing their environmental hat.

If we're trying to do a cleaner greener state, the ideal and the goal is to get these cars off the highway and into mass transit. And I think that one of the -- one of the forgotten groups here is what I call the working poor and the poor.

There are many people -- many of us in this room right here that have options and we can -- I'm from Waterbury and I go down to Bridgeport and Fairfield to take the train.

But I'll be -- I'm here today wearing a hat representing those folks that don't have those options and they have to be on the train and they have to get stuck with the broken trains or the trains that are not showing up and end up on these public transportation buses and their schedules are delayed.

And I think that what these gentlemen are talking about here today and what this fine group behind us is speaking about is nothing more than bringing the Naugatuck Valley Corridor to the 21st Century. You know, this is something that -- we see what the line coming up in New Haven and Hartford has done for the region and we know that this will be even more so for the Naugatuck, for that corridor, the Naugatuck Valley region because there is room for major improvements back there.

And I just wanna ask Mayor Hess really quick, I want you to -- I know you mentioned the project in the -- at the old Uniroyal site. Could you just briefly just -- your vision of support -- the Naugatuck
port, your vision for everybody here in the audience today. And thank you for your advocacy.

MAYOR PETE HESS: Okay, the inland port of Naugatuck is a freight rail project. And what it basically does is it -- it allows companies in the main eastern Canadian areas, New England, Massachusetts -- to get their goods to the tristate area by freight rail rather than by truck.

We all know about the new regulations in trucking and -- and they make it very difficult for very, very large companies to get their goods to the tristate area.

So what would happen would be those companies would come by freight rail, which by the way, freight rail brings in investment from our partner, PanAm Railroads. You're talking about $10 million. They've got $25 million ready to go right now to put on top of your ten.

So we -- we get the goods to the tristate area. They build warehouses in Naugatuck and the surrounding towns. There's gonna be a lot of big companies coming with the freight rail. They're gonna create jobs and then they're going to distribute to the tristate area by truck and Naugatuck will be the main terminal for that.

Now the reverse trip is even better because what that means is that ships coming in to the ports of Newark and New York City -- and you may not know this but there's a freight rail bottleneck right there. There's only one freight line that can get you from Newark or New York City to the New England area. So you've got a freight rail bottleneck.
So what will happen is goods from Europe come in to New York and Newark, can come to New York and Newark by truck to Naugatuck and then north to New England and eastern Canada.

In addition, we're working on an Asian connection whereby goods coming from Asia to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, coming into the inland port of Kansas City -- you may not know that Kansas City's an inland port for freight rail. We're -- instead of doing that, they would go to Canada, get on the Canadian Rail Line, come to Montreal, then come from Montreal down to Connecticut.

If and when that happens, that project in and of itself will be the best thing Connecticut has ever seen and I work on that every day.

But I'm not -- I don't really wanna get into freight rail today, I wanna solve passenger rail. We're ready to go today. This afternoon I could start working if we could get frequent and reliable train service.

REP. REYES (75TH): Thank you, Mayor Hess. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative Reyes. Senator Leone followed by Representative Labriola.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you everyone for coming for your testimony and thank you on behalf of all the different mayors and selectmen as a united front.

And I guess, been hearing your testimony, it piqued my interest when you mentioned that you have available land and that you're interested in TOD, Transit Oriented Development-type projects.
And I guess the question to you and maybe through the group if you can answer on behalf of everyone. I'm interested as to what is everyone's idea of what Transit Oriented Development is and are all the towns in support of it? Because as we've had transportation -- TOD projects in the past, there's a state level thinking and then there's the locality thinking on what TOD is or is not and sometimes there's been resistance from the local towns that they may not want the type of TOD projects that the state might be thinking of.

And number two, if that were to go forward, when you say you have available land, is that available land all the way up and down the rail line or is it sporadic and then it has to be connected somehow differently?

And does that then mean the town or your constituents are in full support of transferring or selling that land to the state to move forward because you know, Representative Reyes mentioned the environmental impact and there might be environmental groups that are not in support of using land for TOD.

So as I hear one side of the testimony you're in support of this but then I'm sure I'll hear from others to say, "That's not what we want" and it might be from your own town constituents.

So I wanted to make sure there's unified voice there because when there is dissention, that does give us pause on whether we need to go forward or not. So if you can comment on a couple of those topics either through you individually or as a collective [crosstalk].
MAYOR PETE HESS: Mayor O'Leary can take over but first of all, we all agree in the valley. We have unanimity. I'm certain if anyone disagrees with me they can come up here.

We're all for TOD. We all have also sort of cool historic downtowns. In Naugatuck, we have -- we have a downtown area with five McKim, Mead & White building that are about a quarter of a mile from the railroad tracks where our downtown area sits.

All the area in between is available and ready to go for TOD which to me has a large residential component. It's gonna be a walkable, livable, sustainable area with bike paths and things like that with a heavy reliance on public transportation, getting cars off the road.

So a two-car family will become a one-car family. A lot of the one-car families will have no cars and will be totally reliant on public transportation.

I would invite you to come to Naugatuck because I believe we have the best TOD site in New England and beyond but I'll also say this, that some of the other better sites are also right in the Naugatuck Valley. You're gonna hear testimony shortly from the Hanes Company in the -- right down the line from us -- they've got 234 acres right on the line.

Now it's a little different. I want you to remember when I said 275, that's within a half-a-mile radius of the train platform. Theirs goes a little bit beyond that. But we have a lot of available land. We have support from the community. Environmentally we're taking former manufacturing sites and making them better, so environmentally we're doing the right thing and the community totally supports it.
So having said that, I'm gonna let Mayor O'Leary take over and speak for Waterbury and also for the rest of our other towns. You know, in Naugatuck Valley COG, we talk about these things all the time. We all get along great and we all agree. So I'll let Mayor O'Leary, our leader at COG, answer that further.

MAYOR NEIL O'LEARY: Senator Leone, the question is a great question. The TOD project in Waterbury, and like all the -- what connects Waterbury down through the valley besides the rail line is the Naugatuck River. And along the Naugatuck River, as you probably are aware, there's greenway projects. Those greenway projects are south and heading north and our TOD -- our successful TIGER grant -- a lot of it had to do with our greenway project because where the Waterbury Train Station is, I don't know how familiar moat of you are but where the Waterbury Train Station is, is Freight Street. And then Freight Street goes right down to the river.

Freight Street has a number of old abandoned brass mills along the north side of Freight Street. We are actively in Brownfield Remediation projects on the entire north side of Freight Street. As a matter of fact, we are starting demolition in April of a 400,000 square foot brownfield abandoned brass factory that will tie in nicely.

Transit orientated development in Waterbury means a number of things. It means housing, it means commercial and retail, it means open space and a park tying in the greenway along the Naugatuck River.
Yeah, there's plenty of environmental issues but the -- those of you, I'm sure you are familiar with Waterbury just like Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport, those brownfields are gonna be the same if we don't do anything about them for the next 50 years like they were the past 50 to 80 years.

So we've been very, very fortunate. We've got 22 different -- different brownfield projects going on right now in the city of Waterbury at different levels. I don't know that there's a community that has more going on in that area right now but we're very fortunate to have been successful with the funding and the -- not only the state of Connecticut brownfield redevelopment funding programs but also the EPA as well.

So we, in our COG, and we kinda do feel pretty good about this, especially here in the LLB. We have 19 towns in our COG and we work together, I've been the Chair for the last six years and most of the members have been in office for that period of time.

We have a very unique situation going on there where we can include all of our State Representatives and State Senators to identify projects that are most important to our area. And we believe that this is the single most important project because not only Waterbury but all the towns north and south, even to Torrington, are involved in different levels of brownfield remediation and other Transit Orientated District projects that they believe are viable for their train stations along the way and they're -- and I believe strongly and they're right behind me -- but I believe very strongly that we are all, in fact, on the same page on this, Senator, because we see this not only as a plus for the Waterbury Rail
Line from actually Bridgeport to Torrington, but we really see this as a plus, honestly, for the state of Connecticut and particularly for our workforce.

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

REP. LABRIOLA (131ST): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to you and Senator Leone for raising this bill, we really appreciate it.

I don't think I've ever seen in my time here in the legislature such a bipartisan effort to have all the legislators and CEOs here. So many of the valley legislators are actually in the room right now and for each of you allied mayors and first selectmen to come up here, we really appreciate this and to have such a united front for such an important project.

I guess I would ask, as the other state Representative for the -- for Naugatuck -- I'd ask Mayor Hess if there's -- if there's -- if you wanted to put an exclamation point on how this project would unlock such a great economic engine of growth for Naugatuck and the region.

MAYOR PETE HESS: Want me to answer?


MAYOR PETE HESS: Thanks, Dave. Good to see you, I haven't seen you in a while but good to see you.

So we've -- we've done a study on this ourselves. And it's about to be released, it's an ACOM CDM study and these were the conclusions from the study -- that our -- this project, the Waterbury Branch Line Expansion, will result in 6,245 new residential units and more than 16,000 new residents. That's just on the residential side.
And of course all those people are gonna be working and paying income tax and helping the state of Connecticut. And you know, all of this emanates from -- from New York City as we said previously.

So in New York City, you wanna have a 3,000 square foot home, you're gonna pay two to four million. Go out to Greenwich, you pay one to two million. Go to Stamford, you pay $800,000. Go to Shelton, pay $600,000. You come up to the valley, for $300,000 or $400,000 dollars, you can get a mansion and you can get a great school system and it's very safe. The bang for the buck is in the valley.

We're gonna -- we're gonna bring the people to the valley where the land is and you know, I wish we could go on a site walk right now and take you right down there and show you because I know you would -- would see it with your own eyes and we have pictures, you're gonna see some pictures later of all the land but it's there and we're gonna have a gold rush when -- when we get this.

So and it's gonna help Connecticut.

MAJOR NEIL O'LEARY: I just want to follow up with one thing. So Waterbury is one of the few cities in the state that has actually seen growth in its school district. Over the last six years, our school district has grown by over a thousand children so we're -- we're right around 19,000 children in our public school.

When we saw all of this happening, we started to interview folks who were coming in in July and August to enroll their children in our school district, finding out where are they coming from,
why are they coming, what's bringing them to Waterbury.

And it was really -- it was shocking and a lot of this information was included in our TIGER grant application. It is unaffordable to live in New York. It is unaffordable to live in West Chester County. Much like Worchester is seeing growth and development because of real estate prices in Boston, Waterbury and the valley is seeing growth and development from people being pushed into the valley from Westchester County, lower Fairfield County as well as New York City.

And so there's a number of families who have come into Waterbury and the valley for several reasons. One, there's really good public schools in the valley or frankly, two, it's very safe in the valley. Three, there is a rail line. As tough as it may be, they might get the train when you need the train or the reliability factor is tough, it gives them -- it gives people an opportunity to get back and forth to work if they need to travel on the rail.

But you know, lastly, it's the fact that the state of Connecticut and honestly, you folks hear it and I hear it too much. The state of Connecticut is a beautiful place to live, especially if you live in New York City. Especially if you live in Westchester County and can't afford to live there anymore.

Don't forget, these young people, like many of our children, they can't afford to live in certain areas of the state of Connecticut but the Naugatuck Valley and north of Torrington is so very affordable. And
very attractive. And that's why we feel so strongly about this rail line improvement.

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

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Representative Rebimbas and gentlemen for your testimony today.

I wanna echo some of the comments that have been made and it is very impressive, the strong bipartisan coalition of legislators and equally if not more impressive is the strong coalition of all of you leaders from these local municipalities.

You know, you spoke about different areas that have seen rejuvenation and I think about Poughkeepsie, New York. When I was working in New York, commuting from Fairfield which in itself was kind of a far way out to be, I had a colleague who had moved from the Midwest and moved to Poughkeepsie and was commuting to New York and we thought -- are you crazy? Because it was such a long way.

But that city has just seen a total renaissance and it's quite a hot place to be. And when you go up route eight and see some of the old factories, I mean I see nothing but potential for growth and revitalization and some really cool areas that you could live as you've described with the water and having transportation and the Transportation Oriented Developments that you're talking about.

I think it's also impressive the very specific and well-drawn out ask that you have put together. So I just want you to know you have my full support and I meant what I said with the commissioner. I know you're not interested in other study; you guys have
an action plan to go but we've really got to get moving on our rail lines and I just again want to applaud you for what you have done to show your strength and your unity and your clarity in terms of what you'd like to see and the benefits that it would deliver. So thank you.

MAYOR PETE HESS: Thank you.

MAYOR NEIL O'LEARY: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you all for your testimony and thank you all for your time today. I thank Representative Rebimbas for organizing this in a manageable way for us all today. And we -- it doesn't go lost on the committee how many of you spent the time here today and how important it is for your respective committees and communities that you would be willing to spend a few hours with us. So it is really appreciated and did send a thoughtful message. We appreciate it.

Minority Leader Klarides with Bill Purcell. After Minority Leader Klarides we will move to Mike Paine, Donald Devivo, Pat Caruso.

REP. KLARIDES (114TH): Thank you, Chairman Lemar and Leone and Ranking Members Devlin and Martin and the rest of the Transportation Committee for raising this bill, bill number 155.

As you know, you've heard a lot about this today and I'm not gonna bore you and be repetitive with that. I think you know our position and I think it has been refreshing this year and all of the partisanship that we've seen to see a bicameral, bipartisan from Mayors, First Selectmen, State Representatives, State Senators all on the same page and pushing what I think we all believe,
notwithstanding how we think it should be paid for, we all believe we need a major investment in transportation in this state. So I think we need to focus on the things we agree on and things we can improve on and move forward with those.

I have with me our illustrious President of the Valley Chamber of Commerce who presides over many, many towns, mostly all the towns in the catchment area we've been talking about and works in conjunction with the Waterbury Chamber. And I'm gonna let him take over the show today to talk to you about why this is -- this investment is so important for business and economic development in our area.

BILL PURCELL: Thank you very much, Representative Klarides and thank you to the distinguished members of this committee.

My name is Bill Purcell, I'm the President of the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce. We represent about 550 businesses both large and small. And our all-America city valley communities.

You know, I know that I'd be preaching to the converted when I would share with you the important role that reliable, frequent, dependable, clean and safe rail transportation means to our community both in terms of economic growth and prosperity and quality of life.

To you, Senator Leone, certainly the proof is in the pudding of what's happening in Stamford. There's been an explosion of economic growth, residential development -- over 4,000-plus units in the south end because it is proximate to the rail line. People wanna live there, people wanna work there.
And to you, Representative Lemar, you at the very confluence. Now it's three lines into New York. The Shore Line East and now the Hartford Line. Sixteen hundred units were built, came on line in New Haven last year alone, right?

So I just wanted to weigh in on behalf of the private sector and earlier my colleague Lynn Ward who is also the president of our statewide association weighed in on this subject.

We're having a kumbaya moment in our valley. Back in earlier of January, the COG, Rick Dawn and company under the leadership of Mayor O'Leary and Mayor Hess brought is all together. Legislators, mayors, first selectmen, business, residents, community organizations -- we all get it and we recognize that this is our moment. This is our opportunity.

I wanna point out that it is happening not despite the fact that we don't have clean, reliable, frequent service, that developers are lining up as we speak. In Shelton, Mayor Lauretti is here. There's four or five projects that are underway in anticipation of the state fulfilling its obligation to help provide frequent and reliable rail service.

Last week it was the city of Derby, Mayor Dziekan, announcing 200 units, a private developer stepping up. Adjacent to the rail line. Again, in anticipation of the rail improvements as well as improvements to route 34 right through the very heart which is also long-anticipated in Derby.

In Ansonia, Mayor Cassetti announced the disposition of two publicly-owned buildings turned over to a private developer for mixed-use development. The
old Fallow site, the ATP and the Parma Building are now in the hands of private developers in anticipation of this happening.

The operative word is leverage. This is not an expense, it's an investment. You've already made -- we have already made as a state, and we credit the leadership of the prior administration, in particular the Commissioner who was bullish on this line. Very bullish on this line, said "We're gonna advance $90 million dollars for" -- as was pointed out, signalization, passing sighting on this 27-mile single track line.

Now is our time. We would be foolish to walk away from it. Now we need the rolling stock. We need the safe, the reliable, the frequent transportation service.

Mayor O'Leary talks about my native city of Worchester, Massachusetts. I've been here 20 years in April and finally it's happening in Worchester because the NBTA recognized that they need to extend service out through all the suburban communities along the line. And people say, "Yes, I can still get to work in downtown Boston in under 55 minutes. I can live in Kelly Square where I grew up in Worchester. I am so proud of what's happening in my fair city."

And it was because of the foresight of our legislative leaders, or local leaders that we've now achieved the kind of economic prosperity that we've been denied. This is our time in the valley and the state is wise to look at all of the branch lines. This is where the action is. Thank you so much for your time today.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you so much for your testimony and for your steadfast optimism in the state of Connecticut. We talk all the time about so many of our strengths and I'm positive if you put up a map of the world and showed where the largest economic generator in the country was located and then looked how close Waterbury was to it, you would think well that has got to be the best place in the world to live, right? I mean it's just that close in proximity to so many opportunities. So many natural resources and such a high quality standard of living and you and people here testifying have certainly hit that theme and we believe in it. And we believe in it. As the good minority leader raves struggling about how to pay for it and we'll postpone that conversation a little bit as well as we think about it for the next few months and years ahead but you have us committed to investing in the Waterbury line and we do have to come together and try to figure out a way to move forward, though. And we do appreciate you being here today.

BILL PURCELL: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Senator Leone followed by Representative Devlin.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to echo the comments from my Chairman but also to say welcome and yes, we are in agreement in terms of investing in our communities and making sure that we can bring it to the next level.

It's good to hear that Worchester is back on the map. You have not lost your accent, though. [Laughter] I still hear a little bit of it.

BILL PURCELL: That's what it is.
SENATOR LEONE (27TH): No, no, I think it's a good accent, I grew up in that area as well so I know it very well. And it's nice to see that they are revitalizing and I think we should follow suit.

So we do wanna make sure that Waterbury can be as successful as Stamford, as successful as New Haven, as successful as the rest of the state.

What I would like to be interested -- the question is to you and as well as the previous speakers. Some of these -- the plans -- some of the future plans that you're proposing that could benefit the state in terms of, you know, where are these future projects gonna look like if we make these investments that you're asking us to do.

So you know, I would love to come visit and drive through. I do that occasionally so I know the area fairly well but not as well as you do but I don't have the visualization of what your project would have an impact on the local area.

So if you could give us any of that kind of data to the committee level so that when we're trying to see what you're proposing and what you think that impact can be, we can get a sense of that and then share it with committee members and even colleagues that don't sit on the committee so that if it comes to the floor, you know, we can gather the support that you're looking for.

So it would just give us that extra data to truly understand what it is you're proposing. That would be helpful for me at least and I would think others.

BILL PURCELL: Yeah.
SENATOR LEONE (27TH): But thank you for all those great efforts and we look forward to your successes being our successes.

BILL PURCELL: I would just say seeing is believing and of course you are invited to experience the rail line and see the parts that are currently under development and those that are future development. I think it would be very helpful to you. And I know the delegation and our mayors would love to host you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): We appreciate it, I got personally invited by Mayor Hassell last week on the phone and you commuted it again earlier and I think I will take you up on that, Mayor, and head on out there.

And again, I see it every day on the rail line from New Haven to Hartford. The amount of development opportunities that have opened up over the last few years by that line, be put in a place we hear it from Mayor Stewart in New Britain talking about what she's been able to build in New Britain because of investment in transportation. We know it and we believe it and you have this committee's support. Thank you.

Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you both for being here and certainly with our Minority Leader it shows the importance of this issue significantly. And I have to say, though, you're gonna have to get the transcript because you've come up for this particular portion of hearing in your testimony because you have come up with several tag lines that would be fabulous to be
promoting the valley. They're in there, I was listening to it.

But two questions for you and I don't know if you'll be able to answer the one, you may have a sense. Have you connected at all -- I know there's contingencies, right, in rail, the transportation, etcetera -- but have you connected at all with the Department of Economic Development?

And secondly, based on what you've talked about in terms of the interest of companies, is there some sense of the number of potential jobs that would be created? We've heard a number of potential residences and I'm wondering about job creation, too.

BILL PURCELL: Well, to the first -- the question about interacting with DECD, interesting you should ask that question. Just last week I was with Congressman Jim Himes who came up to see what about projects in the valley and we talked a little bit about this hearing today and he said, "Let me call the Commissioner, David Lehman."

David is coming down to be a keynote speaker at a Chamber's economic outlook forum on March 6th and has agreed to stay to tour the project that -- potential project in Seymour that you're gonna hear in a short while from Ekstrom who together with her company developed a lifestyle project called Quarry Walk in Oxford and I was setting it aside, so on the new project mixtures, TOD of the 200 acres in Seymour. And the Commissioner said, "I'm interested to learn more about that."
So he is staying and we hope he'll stay the entire day and visit Derby, visit Shelton, visit all of our communities.

In terms of quantifying jobs, that's a more difficult question to get our -- our arms around, but I will say that the valley is in the prevailing path of development patents in the state.

What's happened in Shelton is extraordinary. There are 25,000 people that commute to Shelton every day to work. Companies like Sikorsky, you've heard of them. Or Bic Corporation, Prudential, Hubbell, Edgewell -- these companies are headquartered in our community. And the rising tide is lifting all the boats coming up into Ansonia and Derby.

Developers that made their mark in lower Fairfield County coming right up the corridor not only for residential development but for manufacturing distribution, high-tech engineering, etcetera.

And then, of course, I'm reminded of the freight line possibilities. Mr. Riely, I believe spoke about it earlier, thank you. And the Port of Naugatuck. So these will be the drivers of the primary industry that continues to gravitate to our valley and it's -- it really has been an explosion. It's become a major economic center in our state that we should be -- that we're all very proud of.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): That all sounds very exciting and as I mentioned, you have my full support so thank you both for being here and I appreciate the information that you shared.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you both very much and thank you Representative Klarides for your time. I
have a few more words before we leave, I want to say thank you again.

REP. KLARIDES (114TH): Well, thank you for hearing this bill and listening seriously to this conversation. If you notice, Mayor Hess, similar to me, has trouble expressing his thoughts in speaking out loud so we're working -- he and I are working on that together.

You know, I will -- I will just say finally that, again, there are certainly many things we disagree with in this building but there are many things we agree with and those things, I believe, are making Connecticut as competitive as possible. And by doing -- we only do that by making it a good place for people to come in to work, to start businesses, to expand businesses.

We have such a treasure trove in the valley of hard working skilled labor people that wanna go to work and people that want to drive.

And that not only puts people to work, allows them to transport themselves in a reasonable way instead of traveling all over the state just to get 20 minutes up the road. But it -- but most importantly, it expands economic development. It expands the state and you've seen -- as we talked about -- we'd seen this gone on the Danbury Line and New Canaan Line.

I mean Connecticut is the third smallest state in the country and we're leaving the central part of the state, the south-central part of the state, to flounder when there's so much advantage and there's so much skill and so much treasure there that will help this state as a whole move forward.
I know the Governor mentioned last year, this is a part of the state that has been ignored for far too long. This is the time it should stop being ignored and move forward in a bipartisan way. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. We're gonna move back to the public side of the testimony for a few minutes. We have Mike Paine followed by Donald Devivo and Pat Caruso. Is Mike here? [background speaking] Yeah, yeah, I crossed her off.

MIKE PAINE: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, I'm Mike Paine. I asked Pat Caruso to come up with me to try to streamline the process for you because I know you're having too much fun.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Greatly appreciated. Thank you. Before you -- Pat, before you testify, just announce your name and affiliation before.

PAT CARUSO: Yes, my name is Pat Caruso, owner of Associated Refuse in Newtown.

MIKE PAINE: My name is Mike Paine, I'm the owner of Paine's Incorporated, a rubbish and recycling hauling company located in East Granby, Connecticut.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): I just realized. Sorry, I didn't mean to chase them out.

[Background noise and disruption]

MIKE PAINE: Thank you. I'm Mike Paine, owner of Paine's Incorporated, a rubbish and recycling hauling company. I am a -- my company is a 90 year-old business located in East Granby, Connecticut.

I represent National Waste and Recycling Association. We're here to speak in support of bill 5197. This bill will actually protect our people
and frankly fulfills one of our tenants that every company wants, all their people to go home at night safely.

And would like your support to do that. Be happy to answer questions and I'll let Pat make a few comments, thank you.

PAT CARUSO: Thank you. I'd like to point out that the waste and recycling industry is the fifth deadliest occupation in the nation. It ranks behind loggers, fishermen, pilots and flight engineers and roofers and then of course our industry. And this is reported by the US Labor Department. The Department of Labor.

The law that we're looking at would -- would require motorists to slow down and go around when they approach a waste and collection vehicle.

Some states have already amended existing law that they have to protect the folks in the waste industry. Right now there are 30 states in the country that have a slowdown and go around law in place. Massachusetts, I believe, is coming up very shortly and I think that'll be passed.

On the average, one collection worker dies every one-and-a-half weeks, give you an idea what takes place out in the field.

The fatality rate has increased drastically since 2009. As Mike stated, everyone deserves to go home at the end of the day safely and that's what we're looking for. We have folks that are in our industry and I'd just like to point out the different faces I have, we call it a work for us.
In this country, I think for about ten years, he and his wife bought their first house, believe it or not, in Naugatuck. So -- and they commute all the way down to Newtown.

I have another one, Stan, that's been with us for quite a few years. Three kids through college. And I have another one that just had his first son, this was about three weeks ago.

So the point I'm trying to stress is that these folks -- men, women -- they're everybody that we know. They are in our neighborhoods, they run through, they're there whether it's five below zero or whether it's 100 degrees. Whether it's raining out, they don't have a choice, that's their job, that's their profession, that's what they chose.

So we're just looking for a little recognition, say thanks and help protect these folks that are out there. Just in the past 12 months we had one of our vehicles hit twice. Rear-ended in the back end. Thank God nobody got hurt. And then we're just one small company operating and I'm sure there's a lot more going on that we're not realized.

That being said, more than happy to answer any questions.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you both for your testimony, for speaking on behalf of the people who work for you who put their selves in a pretty tough spot. I frankly, I'm embarrassed to tell you I didn't know it was considered the fifth most dangerous occupation. That's -- that was pretty sobering news. I mean makes sense to see so many folks who are in and out and over and over over the course of a six-hour shift and cars flying by.
We've seen it on the roadways, people impatient, people distracted, people speeding and I guess it's not surprising that it would be as dangerous as it is.

It's particularly sobering when you tell me one collection worker every one-and-a-half weeks. That's a large number. I assume it's nationally?

PAT CARUSO: Yes, it is.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Although we heard this bill last year, it garnered a little bit of support last year and hopefully it'll have more support this coming year and we can get over the finish line. Appreciate you guys coming up. Are there any questions? Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and yes, those statistics are alarming and those are the kind of things we need to hear so that we can act.

But in raising the bill, one or two questions is when you say these accidents, I guess I'd like to know how they are coming about. Are they on like one-way roads, two-way roads or are they on state roads or is it cars just -- is it drivers just impatient that they wanna get to work? I just want to get an overall sense of the scope of the kind of accidents and what's causing them other than, you know, they should be slowing down.

And then to -- and then once we get beyond that then we have to figure out what kind of fines or infractions would we want to impose if this were necessary.

So there's some technical logistics we have to consider but as you give us those statistics, I
would like to know a little bit more in depth some of the analysis on that so I can get a better understanding. And if -- you don't have to answer all those questions now but if you can submit any of that background data to us, then we can sorta take a deep dive on that, that would be helpful.

MIKE PAINE: I'll get you more background data. I can tell you specifically from my company what we are seeing is drivers are driving faster, they're more distracted and it is both -- I think in general I would call it impatience. They wanna be somewhere. We heard earlier about the trains, wanting them to go pick up minutes to go faster to get to point A to B quicker. It's not that much different but it is really -- it is a big problem and -- but I can get you specific data as opposed to my less certified data.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Yes, thank you. That would be helpful. And one final question. So if this were to pass and someone doesn't slow down to get around, how would the -- how would you propose the enforcement to take effect? Would the driver -- would your workers take notice of the license plate and the person passing?

Are you then suggesting we would need cameras on these -- these vehicles? I mean what's that next step? How would you think the enforcement needs to happen if there's not law enforcement nearby?

MIKE PAINE: I would envision that we would reach out to law enforcement in that area. I do not see giving my drivers an additional pair of gloves, a badge. I don't think that would be a good idea but I would see them then informing the local police about -- with that data. We do have a GPS and all
that stuff on our trucks and frankly, I want to make sure that my people aren't doing something they shouldn't do and correct that behavior but I would actually see it being done through the local police.

PAT CARUSO: I would like to answer a couple questions. First of all, the two accidents I talked about in the 12 months, one occurred on a state highway, Route 25 in our town.

The second one was on a secondary road so I don't think -- I do think it -- it doesn't matter where it is, these folks are out in the field and the accidents do happen. And that's basically it. Thank you.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, I appreciate you and your workers for all that they do. Now we know it's dangerous -- more dangerous than we initially thought and I think everyone appreciates the service you provide even though they may not always say it because if -- if your folks aren't there, things get even worse than they could/should be.

So to you and to your workers, please give them our thanks and support.

PAT CARUSO: Thank you.

MIKE PAINE: Thank you very much.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Senator Hwang has a question. So don't -- not yet. Not yet. So close. Sorry about that.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, so close. Thank you very much for coming up to Hartford. It is a critical issue because cars do drive way too fast. And the men that are working and perhaps even women -- what penalty are you
looking to implement for violating this, should this become that.

MIKE PAINE:  Frankly, I really haven't given it much thought. I have several penalties to come to mind but I would be capricious to share them. But it should be enough because it is a problem.

I mean this whole program started because a driver in the Midwest, somebody drove into the back of the truck and killed the individual. So it's -- I'm not trying to make light of it but it shouldn't be a $20 dollar fine. I would see it being more significant and -- and I do believe that it goes to the core of really distracted driving. And something along those lines. I have no idea what that fine is, if it's germane or not. I'm honestly not sure. I'm a good garbage man, I'm not a good attorney.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): The reason being that you're right, is it $20 dollars and what kind of aligning statute does it -- you know, for example, we're working really hard on bypassing school buses. And that is a significant violation. Do you want to go up to that level? Because as you shared, the numbers are incredibly alarming in regards to safety issues for a man or a woman who is doing their job.

And you want them there safe and I think one part it is awareness. Thank you very much for being here and raising these issues but ultimately, as we look to move forward on this, I would really welcome your input to the committee's leadership to talk about what kind of level of penalty there may be. Maybe perhaps you can do some homework as to what should be comparable.
And if you do have some very strong feelings, don't hesitate because, you know, if you don't ask, you're not gonna get.

MIKE PAINÉ: Thank you very much, Senator.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for being up here.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you again for spending your afternoon with us today.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thanks a lot. Don Devivo. Nick Fulco here? Nick, do you wanna join up with Don? I'm asking because my notes say one is President of Dattco and one is Legal Counsel of Dattco so I thought maybe this could --

DONALD DEVIVO: Makes sense. So good afternoon, Senator Leone and Representative Lemar, distinguished members of the Committee.

My name is Donald Devivo, I'm the President of Dattco, Incorporated. As many of you know, we're a local, family-owned bus company and among the other services we provide, we're a motor coach operator and transit shuttle provider in Connecticut.

I've come before this committee almost every year for the past ten years to discuss what's really the same issue, the DOT's latest attempt to expand their network at the expense of local providers, Dattco, Incorporated, New Britain Transportation and Post Road Stages.

One company in our small group of private operators, Kelly Transportation, has recently declared bankruptcy and DOT has taken over their routes.
We've seen DOT try to pull our routes off the bid to get rid of our certificates and after a Supreme Court rule, we had our property right and out certificates, they attempted to condemn our certificates.

The legal battles costing the companies tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees continue and the three remaining private operators all want to be allowed to continue providing service on the routes that we've been running since the 1920s.

I'm gonna address the first section of the bill that deals with the U-PASS program in a moment but the second section of the bill essentially allows DOT to establish routes and contract services anywhere they want. The certificate process, which was put in place by this legislature, will be completely ignored and in fact rendered meaningless.

We're quite confident that once passed, DOT will establish routes right over the top of the ones we're currently operating and essentially put us out of business.

I'm joined by Attorney Dominic Fulco who represents Dattco, your point of transportation, Post Road and I'll let him explain the legalities of the second section of the bill but needless to say, we're opposed to its passage and feel it's not in the best interest of state to remove the three lower price contractors in favor of the most expensive contractor to operate these services.

I'd also like to address the first section of the bill which is the U-PASS program. It's face is across neutral option that would allow private
universities to opt into a similar program at the state university system.

Students are charged under the Student Activity Program and they're given bus passes to ride the bus system operated by the DOT. An aside note, First Transit, a principal operator of Connecticut Transit also operates on-campus transportation at UConn. It was previously operated by UConn personnel and students but that has recently changed.

A new route that was established over the top of a route operated by Post Road Stages to connect UConn and Hartford is now also being operated by First Transit. So now DOT wants to expand the program to private universities.

So many of the on-and-off campus shuttles that the private universities around the state operate are operated by the private bus operators. It's our fear that once the U-Pass program is established at a private school, the next step would be for DOT to establish routes on and off campus to replace the existing privately-funded university shuttles.

These routes would be characterized as public routes but in fact, equipment, management, operations will be subsidized by the taxpayer. The result will be the replacement of the private routes with routes operated by DOT.

I hope you consider my testimony and the testimony entered by Attorney Fulco before you allow this bill to move forward. Thank you for your time and for allowing me to speak to you today. I'd be happy to answer any questions that you have. I don't know if you want to go to Attorney Fulco first or ask questions first.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): We'll go right to Attorney Fulco.

DOMINIC FULCO: Thank you, Senator Leone, Representative Lemar and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee.

My name is Dominic Fulco and I practice law with the law firm of Reid and Reige here in Hartford. I am here today representing three privately held and family-owned bus companies that presently provide transportation services to the citizens of the state of Connecticut; Dattco, Inc., New Britain Transportation Company and Collins Bus Service, Inc. I will refer to my clients as The Companies.

The Companies opposed those portions of sections two and three of Raised Bill 151 which seek to amend sections 13b-34 and 13b-80 of the general statutes and remove the almost 100-year statutory requirement that all operators of a motor bus have a certificate of public convenience and necessity by providing exception that if a person or entity is awarded a contract by the Department of Transportation to provide motor bus services, that person or entity does not need a certificate.

The proposed amendments are the department's latest attempt to deprive the companies of their constitutionally protected property rights and their certificates as those rights were found by the Connecticut Supreme Court in one of the lawsuits brought by the companies against the department over their certificates.

Further, the proposed amendments would also deprive any other certificate holders for motor buses of their constitutionally protected property rights.
This should not be sanctioned by this committee by moving forward with the proposed amendments.

The Companies collectively speak against the proposed legislation for the following reason. First, there's no valid reason for this legislation. The requirement that a person or company must obtain a certificate before operating a motor bus has been around for almost a century. There exists an important reason why that process has been in place for so long. Public convenience and necessity must be shown by the applicant and certified by the department.

Permitting the department to circumvent the certificate requirement by issuing a contract would allow the department to give away bus routes without the showing of a public need and for any reason whatsoever.

This legislation would exclude input from the towns and boroughs where the routes are located and other holders of certificates affected. As such, the proposed amendment removes accountability of the department.

Second, abolishing the certificate requirement would, by legislation, create an inverse condemnation of the company certificates and those certificates would be rendered valueless by authorizing the department to grant the right to operate a motor bus by merely issuing a contract.

This would strip the company of their -- the companies of their constitutionally protected rights and it would spawn more litigation where the companies seek just compensation from the state for their certificates. We are of the belief that the
companies would prevail in that litigation costing the state tens of millions of dollars in damages for the taking of constitutionally protected property rights.

Third, this legislation is inconsistent with what should be the state's goal of encouraging private enterprise accompanied by quality service. The state should be in the business of encouraging private enterprise, not competing with that enterprise and then taking over the business for itself.

Finally, this proposed legislation is designed to target three family-owned bus companies who've been battling with the department both in the courts and before this legislature for a decade to protect their rights.

This legislation then is not designed to promote the public good but is proposed to punish these individual companies because they have dared to pursue their desire to remain in business providing a public service they're provided for decades. This raises another significant constitutional problem with the proposed legislation.

As Mr. Devivo testified, the companies have expended tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees in rebuffing the department's efforts and 2016 -- 2016 -- obtained a decision by the Connecticut Supreme Court in their favor and against the department protecting those property rights and their certificates and defeating the department's attempt to condemn the certificates.

In 2016 in a case called Dattco vs Commissioner of Transportation, the Supreme Court concluded that
companies have constitutionally protected rights in their certificates. As such, the companies cannot be deprived of those certificates without due process of law.

My clients have brought five other lawsuits against the department to protect their losing the certificates all of which are pending as of today.

The latest of those lawsuits was filed two weeks ago seeking among other thing, to declare as unconstitutional section 13b-80 as it relates to the application for the issuance of the certificates. That case is set for an expedited trial beginning on March 9 of this year.

The amendments by the department which are before you today are direct effort via circumvent a decision by the Superior Court and the company's lawsuits against the department. In those lawsuits, The Companies maintain that their certificates provide them with the exclusive right to operate over the routes that they operate pursuant to their certificates.

The Companies further maintain that the four routes that now compromise the busway incorporate or run parallel to the route or routes operated by The Companies pursuant to their certificates of significance to the present -- presently proposed amendments. In those lawsuits, a court ruled that a certificate is required to operate motor buses even if the department has contracted with an operator as it has done in the case of the busway.

The department contracted with First Transit and allowed it to operate over the four routes
encompassing the busway without certificates for those routes as required by section 13b-80.

In order to fix that violation of 13b-80 and to comply with the court's ruling, the department asked First Transit to file applications for certificates over the four routes that compromise the busway and First Transit did so in September of 2019.

In October, 2019, after being notified of the applications, The Companies, my clients, filed petitions with the department opposing First Transit's applications. Besides the pending lawsuits by The Companies which included injunction against the department, another basis for The Companies' opposition is that First Transit's applications were fatally deficient and failing to set forth a public convenience, a necessity required for the issuance of the certificate.

Rather than reject the applications for noncompliance with the department's own application requirements seeking information that would show the applicant met the public convenience and necessity requirement of section 13b-80, the department has allowed those deficient applications to proceed.

The Department rejected The Companies' request for a hearing, apparently desiring to make a decision in secret and has imposed procedures that are not authorized by statute of legislation.

As a result, The Companies commenced its fifth lawsuit -- their fifth lawsuit against the Department in the Superior Court seeking among other things to declare Section 13b-80 as unconstitutional because as it applies to them, it deprives them of
due process rights with respect to their certificates.

In an order issued on February 10th of this year, the court has enjoined the Department from moving forward with those applications and issuing certificates to First Transit until it adjudicates The Companies' constitutional claims.

As you consider the proposed legislation, we think it's important for you to have historical context. My written statement sets forth that historical background but today in my testimony, I do wish to emphasize that since the law was enacted in 1921, including to the present day under Section 13b-80, there was a requirement that an applicant prove public convenience a necessity.

The Department must verify the public convenience and necessity exists. That important requirement will be abolished under the present proposal.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Fulco, I have your testimony so we understand the legal merits of the case that you have before you are being adjudicated in both Superior Court and State Court currently. There is how many lawsuits pending?

DOMINIC FULCO: There are a total of five pending presently.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Okay and how many decisions have been reached over the last handful of years?

DOMINIC FULCO: Well, there's a Supreme Court decision and there are several interim Superior Court decisions that have been reached.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): And I presume moving forward there'll be likely continued litigation as you
referenced in your testimony both spoken and written. And so it's difficult for us to say that we should just wait until this all plays out in the courts because it appears as if this will continue to play out in the courts unless there's clarity between these two somewhat inconsistent statutes.

I think that's -- I think that's the stance that we're -- the Department's asking for clarification, how these two statutes which can be interpreted differently so they'd have greater clarity and consistency.

And so I think that's why the issue's before us. And so I don't think we can now wait the clearance of all outstanding court cases because there are some inconsistencies and directions provided by a previous Superior Court decision.

DOMINIC FULCO: Can I -- may I address that? I don't think there's -- I read while I'm sitting here, read the Commissioner's proposed testimony. I don't think they're here in seeking this proposed legislation because there's an inconsistency. They just wanna change the law to remove the certificate requirement.

If you're talking about the exclusivity issue, let me address that. There have been two decisions by two different Judges on the same case. One says we have exclusivity, the other says we don't. But there's a third Superior Court Judge in a case that did not involve our clients that said there is exclusivity.

So this exclusivity issue is still proceeding its way through the courts and with all due respect, we believe it will reach the Connecticut Supreme Court
and should reach the court for that conclusion. There's no -- there's no conflict between two statutes. It's what rights our clients have within the certificates and the Supreme Court has already found that we have -- our clients have constitutionally protected rights in those certificates.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. And I think that the different directions that you've got and you've indicated part of the reason why the legislature's been asked to step in. Because you reached the conclusion in multiple court cases in which the advice has differed with the previously settled advice and [crosstalk] and it continues to move forward so I think that's why the legislature has been asked --

DONALD DEVIVO: Well, the legislature's been asked to step in because DOT doesn't like the answer they keep getting from the court so they just keep trying a different way to change the outcome.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Any other questions? Senator Martin?

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you. So I'm trying to get an understanding regarding what your -- what your owning the certificate means for routes. I don't know how many routes. I'd like perhaps after this is all over today, maybe if you guys -- I'd like to have a meeting with you so I can have a better understanding --

DONALD DEVIVO: Love that.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): -- if where your position is. I heard and I don't -- can't say if it was here today or my meetings with the DOT, but are you in
any way being subsidized for any of your routes being a certificate owner?

DONALD DEVIVO: Yes. Some of the routes we're operating are subsidized.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): And does the DOT operate or want to operate parallel routes in your certificate territory?

DONALD DEVIVO: Correct.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): And that's the issue.

DONALD DEVIVO: Well, they also want to basically take over the routes that we're operating. And we've been fighting that for probably ten years.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Because you guys believe [crosstalk].

DONALD DEVIVO: And also, we've asked for a meeting with the new commissioner since the day he was put in office and have not been given a chance to even meet with the commissioner. So it just seems like they're determined to do what they wanna do and --

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Why do you feel they want it?

DONALD DEVIVO: They want all the routes to be under the Connecticut Transit banner and operated by their operator. That's the goal.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Senator Leone and followed by Representative Devlin.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One quick question. Thank you guys for coming and we're trying to get a sense of the clear issue because DOT
presents it from what their subsidizing and the cost and some Federal requirements and you're presenting a different case so we're just trying to make sure we understand before we make any real decisions here.

You mentioned the subsidy real quick; would you be able to survive without their subsidy?

DONALD DEVIVO: Well, let me -- let me clarify the subsidy position.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Okay.

DONALD DEVIVO: And to do that, I wanna juxtapose what we do in Massachusetts where we have a very similar situation.

We operate commuter routes from Fairhaven, New Bedford area into Boston. Those routes are not subsidized. However, the fare is set by us. In the situation in Connecticut, you know, this body has determined that they wanna set the fare for example our operation from Old Saybrook to Hartford.

The fare that we charge is set by the legislature and by DOT. If you just operate on that fare that you've set, you can't afford to operate the contract. Or the service because it's just not enough based on the ridership that you have to pay your expenses.

So when you look at the cost that the commuters are paying in Boston, it's several times the cost of a similar trip from Old Saybrook to Hartford. New Bedford to Boston is -- is several times. I think you're paying $5.60 from Old Saybrook to Hartford and the Bedford to Boston trip is like $24.00 dollars.
So could we operate under the -- without the subsidy? Sure, but not at the fare that was set. So it's a decision that's been made to subsidize the riding public but that's not the fault of the operator. It's the policy that was set [crosstalk].

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): No, I don't think we're trying to find fault, we're just trying to get to the [crosstalk].

DONALD DEVIVO: No, I'm just saying, if it's --

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Let me ask you this.

DONALD DEVIVO: So the DOT wants to say, "Well, we're subsidizing the cost". Well, yeah, but you're also setting the fare.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): If you had the ability to set the fare yourself without the subsidy, what would -- how much of an increase would that be for ridership, do you know?

DONALD DEVIVO: I mean I couldn't tell you off the top of my head. We could certainly figure it out. I mean we know what we're charging for the total cost of the service and we know how many riders we have. So it's a simple math to figure out what your -- you know, what your cost per rider is and what dollar you're subsidizing per rider.

REP. LEONE (27TH): Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): [mic not on]

REP. LEONE (27TH): Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you, Mr. Chair. So regarding the example and the question regarding being able to -- if we took the subsidy away and you
were able to increase your rates, how many routes do you have like that currently?

DONALD DEVIVO: Well, there's -- there's probably 20 of them.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): So there's 20 routes that would be --

DONALD DEVIVO: That are operated by the private --

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): So is that 20 routes that are being subsidized?

DONALD DEVIVO: Yes, mm-hmm. We also operate some that aren't subsidized. For example, like to the casinos and things like that. But that's not what we're talking about.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): But your certificate is applicable to those routes as well?

DONALD DEVIVO: Right. Correct.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): I have one more question. So right now there are two ways you can operate fixed bus route service in Connecticut, correct? You can use -- utilize the Commissioner of Transportation can contract for bus service with private providers when the Commissioner determines there's a need for service.

So there's route one under 13b-34 allows the Commissioner of Transportation to contract for bus service directly with private providers when the Commissioner determines there's a need for more service.
Alternatively, there's 13b-80 which is a private entity cannot break 6 bucks for service without financial support from the Commissioner after making the requisite showing of need for service. [Crosstalk]

Those are the two statutes that I'm reading.

DONALD DEVIVO: Right, that's what's proposed. What currently exists right now, to operate buses in the state of Connecticut, you need a certificate. Period. End of story. There's no other -- there's no other way to operate.

DOMINIC FULCO: And that's been -- I'd just like to add to that -- that's been in existence since 1921 that you've needed a certificate to operate motor buses. And as Mr. Devivo said -- period. You need that.

What happened was, in one of our cases the Judge said to the Department, "You need the certificate. You can't just issue a contract." The state had issued a contract the first transit. Judge said, "That's no good. You need the certificate."

And so then they set about this process of trying to get First Transit through the application process. And as I pointed out in my testimony, it's -- the application process is flawed that First Transit hasn't stated in their application what the public need is. And our view is that they can't demonstrate the public need because our clients are satisfying the public need and have done so for decades.

So what the Department has done is come to this committee and said, "Let's end around the Judge and just let -- let us issue contracts and abolish the
certificate requirements." Abolishing the certificate requirements under 13-B-80, I explained, would just strip our clients of constitutional rights and we'd be in court suing for just compensation which would be millions of dollars at a time -- when I don't think the state can afford that.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Okay. Other questions? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony today.

DOMINIC FULCO: Okay, thank you for having us.


So Cathy Ekstrom? Excellent, thank you. So are we taking Representative D'Amelio's time, is that what we're doing?

REP. BUTLER (72ND): Yes, we are. This is another consolidation.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Excellent, we love those here.

REP. BUTLER (72ND): To help consolidate your time. We'd like to thank you, the Co-Chairs Representative Lemar and Senator Leone and Senator Martin and all the honorable members of the Transportation Committee, especially our very own Representative Reyes that actually allowed us to have this in front of us for consideration to give our input on today.

I have some brief comments, I'm gonna turn it over to my colleague here, Representative Ron Napoli and then we're going to hear from Catherine Ekstrom and she's an example of what we hope to develop with this new Waterbury Rail Line and hopefully when you look at what she testifies, you can multiply that
times 100 in terms of our expectation of what we hope to achieve.

At any rate, I just wanted to say when we look at this Waterbury Rail Line, you know, many of us see this matter of fairness. I've been here going on 14 years and I have supported all the other rail initiatives on the state. We -- me and many of my colleagues have voted for and supported rail development all over the state.

And now we're saying it's our turn. It's our turn. It's -- and that's just been reported, it's gonna take some time even with the money that we've started to put into this, it's gonna take what, four to five years to get new cars? Well, hopefully we could find some used ones to, you know, put in service before then but that just tells us that it's so important to get started today on where we need to be going down the road.

Also I wanted to say that we've already in an initial investment of $90 million dollars so, I mean to get the return on investment, we need to act now. Mayor Hess and Mayor O'Leary pointed out eloquently to the point in metrics of why we need to actually take this initiative on. The economic development alone in this corridor could mean not only a boom for the valley towns and city -- every town that gets some economic development out of this will benefit all the cities and towns in the valley but more importantly, the state of Connecticut.

If we want to actually help the state of Connecticut, I think that we could get the biggest bang for the buck out of this valley initiative.
And finally, Senator Leone was asking about, you know, particular jobs. Well, I could tell you that Mayor O'Leary pointed out all the brownfield sites that we're actually developing. We've also put a lot of money into vo tech schools, okay, and the Naugatuck Valley manufacturing city. We have six of these around the state but a couple in our corridor that we can actually utilize getting those students that are going to these schools jobs. All up and down the valley.

So I just wanted to say, again -- my last point is this is a matter of fairness and that we have supported every other initiative for more than a decade here. It's our time and we shouldn't be put on the bottom list; we need to be put on the front burner and let us actually develop our valley and help the state of Connecticut.

REP. NAPOLI (73RD): Thank you, Representative. I'm Ron Napoli and I represent the 73rd District in Waterbury. I'd like to thank the Chairs of this Committee and the Vice Chairs and Ranking Members and the entire Transportation Committee for having this public hearing. We greatly appreciate your efforts.

I'm honored to be here today with the Waterbury Rail Line Caucus in support of Raised Senate Bill 155, AN ACT CONCERNING RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS. Our colleague, state Senator Joan Hartley was here for quite some time but she had to go for another commitment. But she also thanks you all very much for having this public hearing.

The Waterbury Rail Line is a 27 point one rail line from Waterbury to Bridgeport which is the longest of
the three branch lines that make up the Metro-North Railroad Line.

Currently, Waterbury Rail Line has six stations. Waterbury, Naugatuck, Beacon Falls, Seymour, Ansonia, Derby, Shelton. There are approximately one thousand daily riders and as we know, ridership has increased 34 percent when we added one inbound trip to the morning peak hours commute last year.

As a united bipartisan front, we stand behind our suggested plan for the Waterbury Rail Line. We hope that by bringing some focus to the Waterbury Rail Line, that transportation, investment and economic growth will be improved throughout the Waterbury Valley Region.

If we make necessary investments in the rail line, I believe my constituents will see an immediate improvement in their quality of life.

And if I can just share a quick story with you, you know, in my district, many houses are going up for sale. And many of the people who move in are from New York. And when I go over to meet them, they tell me that at least one spouse still has to drive from New York every day for work. And they won't take the rail because it's too much time.

So this would definitely improve the quality of life and help commerce and economic development and we thank you all very much for your time.

REP. BUTLER (72ND): And before I turn this over, I just want to say that Representative Ditria-Klarides was supposed to be a part of this, too, but she got called off to another committee so I just wanted to let you know that and I will introduce Catherine Ekstrom with the Haynes Development.
CATHERINE EKSTROM: Thank you very much. My name is Cathy Ekstrom, I'm the Development Manager for Haynes Development Company out of Seymour, Connecticut and I'd like to thank Senator Leone, Representative Lemar and the members of the Committee and Commission for allowing me to testify -- give some testimony today in support of bill 155.

You heard Bill Purcell's testimony earlier and unfortunately I was supposed to follow him and it would've been a great intro because you're asking all the questions that I want to provide you the answers for.

So I hope you excuse me, I'm gonna read a few things but then I'd like it to be a little bit more fluid, I perform best that way.

One of the most important benefits of infrastructure investment in the creation of conditions for future growth, which is the key to making successful transportation investments. Transportation investments have broad positive impacts upon the economy in general. Future infrastructure investments can also provide sizable returns but only if they are the right investments at the right time. Investments that create room for growth.

The challenge is to choose the best infrastructure projects that enhance growth and productivity. And the objective of public investment in rail is to enhance the general prosperity of a region as a whole.

Conversely, neglecting public investment in rail prevents economic growth, productivity and prosperity. To realize the broader economic pay of real infrastructure investments requires a specific
vision which will guide our future transportation policies and investments.

Thank you in advance for allowing us to present our TOD project to you which is both specific and attainable. On behalf of Haynes Development, we thank you in advance and I'd like -- I would like to present you, if I may, a few boards to maybe help understand what we're attempting to do.

Haynes Development is a private development company out of Seymour, Connecticut and in 2002 we purchased 223 acres along the Route 8 corridor which we affectionately call Seymour Beacon Falls LLC. The property has 94 acres in Beacon Falls and 120-some odd acres in Seymour.

You've heard today the support throughout the valley region for TOD and for the sake of development.

I can honestly say that there has been bipartisan support for the development of TOD along the Route 8 corridor since our purchase of this property back in 2002.

Irrespective of the administration in either Seymour or Beacon Falls, there's always been support for this project. Administrations have come and gone but the support has always been there.

This project is enormous. It's 223 acres, two miles along the Metro-North Rail intersecting from -- excuse me, I'm a little nervous -- Route 67 and Seymour at the intersection of 313 along the Metro-North line to Beacon Falls at Route 42.

So if you understand the area, it basically runs from the police department which is right in the downtown area of Seymour, up through to Brault Hill
Road where DOT has their garage. It's two miles, it runs along the Metro-North Line and it has Naugatuck River frontage as well.

It's sandwiched in between Waterbury and Bridgeport so it's idea for development -- economic development in the region as well.

I just have to peek at my notes. So with 223 acres, it has always been our intent to develop this as a TOD project. One of you asked earlier what does that mean. A TOD project to us is all of the above. It's housing, it's retail, it's commercial, potentially light industrial. The key is the transportation.

You've heard before me today many, many people say that the rail is underserviced. It would be utilized. We have the opportunity here to develop Seymour Beacon Falls as a true TOD that's not only gonna benefit Seymour and Beacon Falls, it's gonna benefit from Bridgeport to Waterbury. The areas we hear about, the greenways, our project also would give two miles for the Naugatuck greenway as well. We're committed to devoting that property as well and I would welcome any questions that you would have regarding the project.

The Metro-North line has been studied and planned. In 2000 -- in 2000 through a corridor had a plan study which was called the Phase Two Report. In 2005 the Route 8 Corridor had the Metro-North study. We've studied this time and time again, now the time is for action.

We as a private landowner made the investment about two decades ago now in hopes of developing this project. This is what the state needs, this is what
the region needs, this is what this coalition's all about and I'm here on behalf of private development saying we can work together private and public and get this state moving forward.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Ms. Ekstrom for your testimony. I think you represented it aptly in public for bringing this up and providing visuals which are always appreciated here as well.

I know there are a few questions so don't jump out of your seat quite yet. Senator Leone followed by Representative Devlin.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for coming on up, especially with the visualization, that actually helps and I want to ask a question where you can actually utilize your pictures here.

So from my perspective, I've heard about this available land and where these projects could be. I know the area but not as much as I would like so since we have a nice map in front of us, I'm wondering if you can maybe point to the areas or the regions that the geographic positions of these developments you're looking at.

I'm seeing some green area that's circled, is that like a park or something or --

CATHY EKSTROM: This entire park covers the 223 acres that we have.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): That you -- now you as a private developer or in total.

CATHY EKSTROM: [Mic not working].
SENATOR LEONE (27TH): So you would use all of your land to develop a TOD project and are there any other parcels that is being talked about that's not under your control that would be in tandem to this?

CATHY EKSTROM: Yes.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): And are you able to point that out on this?

CATHY EKSTROM: It's probably all [mic not engaged].

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Okay, all right.

CATHY EKSTROM: So one of the key features of our project is the downtown Seymour stuff and that [Inaudible 03:51:40] would be recommended. There's actually no parking spots here. This would be a true TOD. It's remote. I mean we have the opportunity with 223 acres to do whatever we all see fit -- housing, retail, rail access, [Inaudible 03:52:08] if necessary.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Now that's a big parcel of land, natural land that's right along the river. I would suspect that there might be some community people in the town that may not want that to be developed or has there been any talk locally or any resistance or we're not at that stage yet.

CATHY EKSTROM: So we haven't gone up to any public funds but since our purchase of the property in 2002, we've had numerous -- as I mentioned, there's been administrations that have come and gone, obviously, for the last, you know, two decades.

We have received nothing but support irrespective of who's been in office. We've met with the First Selectmen of both towns over the last years. Those in office today are here, they support it
wholeheartedly. We've had planning and zoning informal, you know, informal discussions. Economic development folks from both towns.

We were really ramping this up probably back in 2003, 2005. Just couldn't get the traction because the rail -- we need the rail service and at that time the Metro-North line was being studied and it was during that time that the recommendation was made to relocate the Seymour station to our property. Without having the proper sighting, signalization and added service, that wasn't going to go anywhere so we just kind of land banked it saying -- okay, when the time is right we'll come forward and we'll have to go through all of those land-use agencies and get, you know, the town support.

But I really feel knowing that the administrations for both towns and the region, the COG, the Chamber, we have huge support throughout the valley -- I'm confident that we're gonna get that public support for this.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you. That's helpful for me and hopefully for the Committee as well to be able to point to something on a map so appreciate that. So unless there's other questions, you don't have to stand up any longer.

Okay, so let me give it over to Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you very much for your presentation. But actually could you just give reference to what those two are? What are you showing in those two maps?
CATHY EKSTROM: Sure. So these are just showing more within the region. If you're not familiar where Seymour big falls is and not everybody is, depending on where you're located in the state.

So this is showing our location along the rail in relationship to Waterbury and Bridgeport. So it's right along that Route 8 corridor, roughly what, nine miles south of Waterbury and probably 14 miles.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): So you're showing the communities on that map.

CATHY EKSTROM: Right. Here -- here I'm showing the property that we own.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Yep.

CATHY EKSTROM: Here I'm showing regionally where we're located and the rail systems. This is showing the rail systems throughout the --

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): And that map?

CATHY EKSTROM: And that's very similar to this map that shows -- it's a closer view, it's showing the downtown Naugatuck area which Mayor Hess was talking about. And the relationship to the Waterbury Airport. You know, we don't hear that discussed much but we've got the second largest -- longest -- runway in the state of Connecticut right in our back yard. So this is where our property is and this is where the Waterbury Oxford Airport is located.

So there's -- there's great opportunity for growth. So just as a side note, a question was asked, if you don't mind me just expounding.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): No.
CATHY EKSTROM: So as developers, we're doing a project in Oxford. Somebody made reference to that earlier and that's called Quarry Walk. So Quarry Walk was a 32-acre mixed use -- we jokingly say it's a TOD without the T. So it's located along Route 67 and if you've never been to Oxford, it's very rural. It's probably seven to eight miles off of Route 8 and seven to eight miles from Route 84. So it's not on the beaten path, so to speak.

We were told for decades, it was a quarry that we owned, that you would never be able to develop Quarry Walk. And we always said, "We know the market, we know if we do it'll be successful." So I think Bill Purcell was referencing how Congressman Himes came out to Quarry Walk, he wanted to see it firsthand.

I only mention that -- well, I mention it for two reasons. Number one, we're a developer, we know what we're doing, we know how to do it. So it's not like we're just a landowner and we can't do this. We can put this in action tomorrow. The rail service is there, this is a home run.

The other point is, Quarry Walk is 32 acres. It has over 300 square foot of mixed retail, 54,000 square foot of medical and 150 units of residential. The town restricted us on the residential, I might say, we wanted a much higher density but some towns just aren't supportive of that.

Seymour Beacon Falls is ten times that. So Quarry Walk, we're developing probably over a thousand new jobs and tax benefits to the town are over a million dollars. So you can only imagine what a project like Seymour Beacon Falls, which is ten times the synergy that would be able to develop there so the
potential for new jobs -- it's in the thousands. You know, we haven't done the study but it's -- it could be 10,000. I don't have the number.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): That's impressive property that you own and I don't know if you mentioned this in describing mixed use but would part of that also, you know, be retained in terms of just, you know, nature and those kinds of recreational activities?

CATHY EKSTROM: Yep. Definitely. So because it's part of the Greenway Project, we see reserving, if you will, incorporating part of the greenway from Ansonia down, up. So it is part of the Greenway Project, we've made that commitment.

Because it's adjacent to the Naugatuck River, we might incorporate some recreational opportunities there. Both towns, both Beacon Falls and Seymour are very supportive. Whenever we meet, it's not like, "Well, I want this in my town, you can have this in your town." We're gonna work collaboratively and it's going to be viewed as one project and we'll see that it is developed in the best way possible. And again, it's an enhancement to the state. It's not just an enhancement to Seymour Beacon Falls.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Okay. I think it's really exciting, you know, our state does have such incredible rich history for our country and you also in the valley have our manufacturing heritage that has moved on but such a great opportunity to revitalize and just create a whole new exciting area. I think it's super so -- and thank you for giving us the visual.
CATHY EKSTROM: And it's not remote. It's right around the corner from downtown Seymour so it's just an extension and we don't wanna lose that heritage of the downtown. We want to create it very pedestrian, you know, add a pedestrian walkway, if you will, from our project over to the downtown area because we wanna -- we're not trying to leave that behind, we wanna enhance that.

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

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you very much, those visuals are quite helpful and I think we may end up referring back to them so we might need to make a big copy.

CATHY EKSTROM: Sure. Thank you.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Are there any other questions? If not, thank you again for your testimony. We look forward to trying to figure out how to best help your community with this interesting idea. So thanks again.

Okay, I think we have Representative Delnicki up next. I know he's been patiently waiting. After him, that will have been three officials and then we'll go back to the public for Mr. Alec Slatky and Susana Beyl. And Jen Wildness and then we'll finish up with the rest of the officials.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Good afternoon Senator Leone. I see Representative Lemar stepped out. Ranking member Martin and Devlin.

I'm State Representative Tom Delnicki, I represent the 14th district South Windsor and I'm joined today
by Representatives from the Post Road Stages Collins Bus Service.

This is a small family-owned business that's been in existence and operation over 100 years and I had the pleasure back when there in 2012 to be part of that hundred year celebration. And their representative, represented here by Thomas Snow who will be speaking against provisions in Section 2 and Section 3 of Raised Bill 151 which you've heard quite a bit of discussion about just a few minutes ago.

That would have dire consequences to this 100-year-old small family business which begs the question, is Connecticut open for business? And I'd like to turn it over to Tom. You wanna introduce yourself?

TOM SNOW: Yes, good afternoon. Thank you, Chair and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Thomas Snow, I'm representing Post Road Stages and Collins Bus Service. I want to thank you all and Representative Delnicki for his time today in hearing what I have to say.

Our company's bus service has always been committed to meeting the state's needs and doing so at the lowest cost for taxpayers. We are located in South Windsor, Connecticut. We employ personnel who live throughout the state and we support the surrounding community we live in.

We've always met the public transportation demands for the state of Connecticut and we will continue to do so with your support. I'd like to -- for the convenience of time, skip over some of the legislative things that were brought up earlier. I don't know if we need to touch on those again.
But I would like to say and use this time to say that allowing the Department of Transportation to hand out contracts and circumvent 13b-80 would diminish the protections it affords. Private bus companies that currently run parallel routes would be shut out of the process.

The towns in which the service runs through would lose the ability for the First Selectmen or Mayor of those towns to bring written petition to the department and respect a newly proposed routes, fares, frequency, schedules and continuity of service.

Circumventing the statute relieves the Department of Transportation from finding and showing that there is a need for that service.

The Department of Transportation would be empowered to hand out contracts to run this public service how they see fit while silencing any public input.

These statutes work in connection with one another -- 13b-34 gives the power to the Commissioner to contract for bus service while 13b-80 lays out the process and provides protections for those that it affects.

The agency should be held to the current laws of the state, not requesting that it be circumvented for unfounded benefits. I've come here today because I believe that the legislature is working to strengthen the rights of business and people of our communities, not weaken those protections.

Government functions best when its policies and procedures are open and transparent. The amendment fails those basic principles. For this reason, we ask that the Committee members reject Sections 2 and
3 of Raised Bill 151. Thank you for your time in hearing me on this issue today. I'm here to address any questions you might have or shed some light on those two statutes.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Jeff, would you care to introduce yourself and make a few comments?

JEFFREY MEYERS: Jeffrey Meyers with Collins Bus Service as well. I just wanted to point out -- if you have questions for him, maybe first, because there was some stuff that came up in earlier testimony that I just wanted to address. Mainly what 13b-80 does.

Our route, our certificate of route, Route 917 as an example, takes off at Exit 68 off of I-84 at 8:10 in the morning. Brings people into Hartford with a drop-off at Central Row. The DOT has contracted with HNN Management to operate the 913. It, too, picks up at 8:10 at Exit 68 off 84 and goes into Central Row at Hartford.

That's because the DOT contractor is someone that didn't go through the 13b-80 provisions showing that there is a need and a necessity for their service. So right now the state is paying for two 57-passenger buses to pick up at the same commuter lot at the same exact time and bring -- go to the same destination at Hartford. It's just not necessary.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you. So I think there are a lot of questions that have been asked and we're probably gonna be looking at information and doing a little bit more of a deeper dive so just having your testimony, and I'm looking at your testimony as we speak. It's helpful so we'll -- I think as we get a little more in depth and have more
questions that we may not have right at this moment, we'll be reaching out to all parties for more information.

So I just wanted to say thanks for coming up here to shed some light on this because we're trying to figure out what it is we need to do here. So thank you and let me open it up to my rankings if they have any questions.

Senator Martin.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you, Mr. Chair. So am I to understand that you are competing with the state of Connecticut? You have a certificate that you've had for x-amount of years. The state has come in and they contracted with a third party to provide pretty much the same service that you are providing to Hartford. Correct?

THOMAS SNOW: Correct and subsidized service.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): So it's -- they have subsidized their third party? Or both of you?

THOMAS SNOW: Yes.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Both of us the same.

THOMAS SNOW: You could have maybe already mended most of the bus service in the state as all subsidized service through private contractors.

They make a dissention that that's not the case but H&S Management is a private contractor who runs out of Hartford, Stamford and New Haven.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): But without the certificate. [Crosstalk] Or without having to go through the process of -- of applying for the certificate and getting awarded. So is there something that
prevents them to DOT statutorily that your -- you've been given exclusive rights, I would imagine and they're circumventing by going into a third-party contract and not having that entity apply for certificate? I don't know if I'm stating that correctly.

THOMAS SNOW: Yes I would say-- I would say that the exclusivity is still out for debate, yes. But they have -- the statute is for anyone who operates a motor bus. They've been giving out contracts without following 13-80 statute. They have not given towns notices; they haven't given private operators notices and they haven't handed out certificates to these other third parties. No certificate has been handed out to -- since the Department of Transportation became in control of -- of bus routes from public utilities.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Okay. So I asked the earlier parties if they were -- if we got rid of the subsidy would they -- you'd have to raise rates. Are you guys open to getting rid of the subsidy, being able to increase your rates and provide that service?

JEFFREY MEYERS: When you ask it, though, are you speaking like every bus state-wide? Because we're all subsidized the same. You know, any blue bus out there, the one that cut you off this morning, Representative, over there?

I mean they're all -- that's operated by H&S Management but they're subsidized the same way Collins Bus is, the same way Dattco is. The same way New Britain Transit is, we're -- we're all the same. We're just a smaller contractor. We're based
in Connecticut. H&S Management is based in Ohio. You know, a subcontractor is a contractor. We just happen to have certificates because we follow the law.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): But all subsidies are equal? Is that what I'm hearing you say?

JEFFREY MEYERS: They are, yes. They're all subsidized routes.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): I had another question, it just slipped my mind but if it comes back to me, thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Senator. Are there any other questions? If not, I do have one quick comment. Yes, Representative.

REP. DELNICKI (14TH): Think about that. The comment pertaining to two buses at the same place at the same time and the economics of it. You talk about saving money. There should only be one bus there at that point in time. That duplication makes no sense whatsoever.

You've got a reputable company that's been doing a great job, that's been in business for over 100 years and suddenly another company shows up on that same route. It makes no sense whatsoever. And again, I thank the Chairs and I thank Ranking Members and the members of the committee here for listening to the testimony here.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you and we will look into that. So thank you very much for the testimony.

THOMAS SNOW: Thank you very much.
SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Okay, let's move to the public. Is Mr. Alec Slatky here? Yep, come on up.

ALEC SLATKEY: All right, good afternoon Chairman Leone, Ranking Members Martin and Devlin and the rest of the members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for being here, my name is Alec Slatkey, I'm Director of Government Affairs and Public Affairs for AAA Northeast and I'm here testifying on behalf of both AAA Northeast and the AAA Allied Group.

The two AAA clubs collectively represent over one million members in the state of Connecticut and we're here to express our strong support for the seatbelt provision, sections 8 and 9 of Senate Bill 151. AAA has long supported seatbelt laws which we know save lives and prevent injuries and Connecticut has a long history as a leader in occupant protection.

In 1985 we passed one of the nation's first seatbelt laws but unfortunately since then we've fallen behind. Most states right now require everyone to be properly restrained in all seats but in Connecticut, if you're 16 and over in the back seat, you don't have to be restrained in a seatbelt and that leads to tragic results.

And according to our analysis and the UConn Crash Data Repository, in the past decade more than 50 people were killed -- 50 adults were killed while riding unbelted in the back seat in Connecticut. More than 1,900 people were injured while riding unbelted in the back seat.

And we see a spike in the chart -- in the testimony, in the written testimony. We see a spike right at
age 16. Right when kids are most vulnerable. That's not when we think the seatbelt requirement should expire. But it's not just teens that are suffering the consequences, it's older adults as well. In fact, the oldest unbelted casualty in the last decade was 89 years old.

So we know this affects everyone and this was a misconception going back, you know, 35 years when we first passed the seatbelt law, that -- oh, you were relatively safer in the back seat so it wasn't as important to wear your seatbelt. And that's still what a lot of people think today according to an Insurance Institute for Highway Safety survey.

But it's just not true. If you are unbelted in the back you're more likely to be killed. You're more likely to be seriously injured and you're twice as likely to become a projectile and kill or injure someone in the front seat of the vehicle.

You know, when we teach drivers' ed to our students or defensive driving to our seniors, we tell people not to leave loose objects on the back seat because they could fly forward if you slam on the brakes and that could go with a lot of force even if it's a pretty light object. If it's a, you know, ten-pound backpack or something like that it's gonna go forward with a lot of force if you slam on the brakes at 50 miles an hour.

Now imagine it's not a ten-pound backpack but it's a 150, 180 pound person. That's gonna be very devastating to everyone else in the vehicle. The driver's certainly not gonna be able to maintain control of the vehicle in the event of a hard brake.
And I would say lastly that, you know, we know seatbelt laws are effective. They were effective in Connecticut when we passed the law 35 years ago, seatbelt rates went from 11 percent to 69 percent and they've continued going up ever since. We're at record highs here in Connecticut which is great in the front seat but we're falling behind in the back seat nationally.

We've got a great coalition of partners. Over 90 coalition members in the testimony -- the written testimony I've provided that support rear seatbelt laws from law enforcement to public health educators, to folks in the education community. Community safety advocates. We think 2020 is the right time to pass the seatbelt law and we're really excited to be advocating with a great coalition and I'm happy to take any questions.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you for your testimony, are there any questions? Okay. I think you -- I think you've got everyone sold, so we'll see.

ALEC SLATKY: All right.


JEN WIDNESS: Good afternoon, I'm Jen Widness and I'm the President of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges and I'm here today to testify on Section 1 of SB 151 which seeks to allow the Department of Transportation to create a program to provide colleges and university students access to bus and off-peak rail services with approval of the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management.
As you heard earlier today, Connecticut has a U-Pass program that has been in creation some since 2017 and was developed in partnership with DOT and the colleges in the state.

It presently provides unlimited rail and bus transportation in Connecticut for undergrads at UConn and the CFCU system. Twenty dollars per semester is charged to eligible students on their tuition bill as a student fee to pay for the pass.

Section one of this bill appears to authorize DOT to create a U-Pass program and offer it to any college and university in the state.

CCIC, on behalf of our member institutions has been engaged in conversations with DOT to expand the U-Pass program to the independent colleges in the state since its inception.

While the design of the program has some limitations which I'll get into a little bit later, overall we strongly support the expansion of the U-Pass program because it will offer students at our member institutions greater access to school, work and internship opportunities in the region.

We believe U-Pass should be seen as an economic development tool to help the state retain more of recent college graduates and as the Yale students who testified earlier articulated, it'll make it easier for students to enjoy the many assets that are available around their institution and expose them to the robust public transportation system that Connecticut has to offer.

As to the bill itself, we just wanted to know a couple of things. For one, the language in the bill is permissive so only it grants DOT the authority to
create a U-Pass but it's not mandated. And the program designed by DOT has to be approved by the Office of Policy and Management.

Further, the bill limits train service for students under this program in the future to off-peak. And right now, U-Pass students at the public colleges can utilize the rail card at any time.

On the pricing, I'm a little concerned about some of the testimony that we received earlier today by the Commissioner. I know they're supportive of expanding the program but it really seemed to me that they would be charging private colleges that are closer to the rail service more money and it seems like if a capacity analysis is going to be done it should probably be done for all schools, not just private colleges that are joining the program later because we do have a number of public colleges that are right on top of rail as well.

So we hope that pricing for students at public and private college students will be the same if not very similar, depending on the region.

As the program -- as for the program itself, I just also wanted to note there are a couple limitations to the current program. It's only available for undergraduate students right now, not graduate students. Obviously some of our schools might be interested in expanding to graduate students but just the current program that DOT offers does not allow that.

In addition, the pricing is just -- it's -- a school has to buy a pass for every student enrolled in that -- in that college or university regardless of whether or not they will be utilizing the program so
some of our schools aren't gonna pass that cost on to students and they might not be able to participate in the program just because of the way it's designed right now.

But overall, we're really grateful to all of you for raising this bill and for being supportive of the program and we look forward to working with everyone moving forward. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you for your testimony today and for waiting it out for a few hours with us.

You highlight a number of issues that I think we're struggling with as well, like what does the design of this program look like, how do we ensure there's equity within it and how do we ensure that the pricing model works.

We hear a number of questions about program elasticity and transit demands. How we can both assure access without pushing out people who are paying, who've been paying full price -- a much, much higher price for a long period of time -- so I think those are all parts of the conversation that we're glad to have you speak to because it's the same conversation we are having amongst legislators between ourselves and DOT currently.

So I think you've brought a lot of voice to those concerns.

JEN WIDNESS: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Are there questions -- sorry, Jen, did you have something --

JEN WIDNESS: I just would say there aren't a ton of schools that are ready to join right now but there
are a couple of schools like the University of Bridgeport and the University of New Haven who are assured access to the program in the past year or two and are really eager to get on board.

So I think as school -- it wouldn't be like -- it wouldn't be all the schools joining at once so I think that, you know, maybe we could expand capacity to let those schools enroll and then continue to have these discussions that were highlighted today as potential concerns.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Yeah, I think part of that is -- looking at the -- evaluating how other states and other universities handle that relationship, they all -- they all rely on the fact that every student will pay either part of the student activity fee or another associated university-based payment structure.

I think there are only two of the myriad of programs that did not have every student pay. It was a way to bring cost certainty to the DOT while also providing that opportunity.

So I think as we -- as we focus on what that program design looks like amongst legislators and you. Like you being willing to talk to us about a different program model that you see would certainly be useful. Thank you. Representative Devlin.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for testifying on this. I know we've talked about this before and which was why I also asked the Commissioner the question to clarify that from a public school and private school perspective, they would be treated the same which also in my mind means the rates -- separate from rail for just a
second -- but rates are gonna be the same, the cost is gonna be the same the way the program works would be the same.

So there wouldn't be a differential between a private college and a public college in terms of, you know, structuring fares or how the program would work.

But he did raise that question, you know, clearly related to rail and I think that's something that we do need to really consider. I mean the notion of off-peak on Metro-North and I think of Fairfield to Stamford or I think it would only go to the New York border so they wouldn't help in terms of going into Grand Central Station is -- is real valid.

But at the same time, looking at what that cost really is, because all of our rail lines are subsidized at different rates, too. I think Metro-North/New Haven Line is the least subsidized out of all of our rail lines. So it is pretty complex.

And there are other schools, I think, that want to opt in that also don't have necessarily a transportation -- a robust transportation infrastructure around them -- even from a bus perspective.

So I think you being available is a good resource to us because we've come up with probably three things we really need to tackle and sort of dig in during this public hearing, this being one of them.

JEN WIDNESS: Okay.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): But I totally support the notion that the Commissioner also brought up. We're
starting to create those habits of using public transportation.

So great way to do that especially if then we can keep those students by having good paying jobs in our state and then they've already built those public transportation habits would be a really positive thing.

JEN WIDNESS: Yeah and I just want to highlight UB's testimony in particular. They're really ready to go. They have a lot of commuter students, lot of first gen. They're 60 percent PELL eligible. They want their students to be able to access internships in Norwalk and Stamford and this will allow them the ability to do that.

And they're -- they're graduating so many STEM students that we would really be well-suited to retain in the Fairfield County region and I just think what you're saying like we need to think about this from a talent perspective, what this will do to get kids exposed to jobs in the region and also to stay here after graduation.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): And I have to say when we first talked about the U-Pass program, I was thinking of the busway. Because we were talking a lot about CTfastrak. So it didn't occur to me about rail and I don't even know what percent of U-Pass is used on rail versus buses and that may vary depending on where a school is located. But maybe there's a bus-only way to go while other things are sorted out. I don't know.

JAN WIDNESS: So a lot of schools actually -- sorry to interrupt.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): No, please.
JAN WIDNESS: A lot of the schools have Legacy Bus Pass program so this is really taking it to the next level. So UV, UNH and Trinity all have a bus pass called U-Pass and they pay about the same amount right now and it's -- and it gives students the right -- the ability -- to ride buses.

So I think the rail component is really enticing for a lot of schools and -- but we understand the crunch on Metro-North in particular and that's what folks are worried about. I just don't think it's going to be that many students so I think we should dig a little deeper on the data and maybe again like roll it out for those schools that are ready to go and see what it looks like. And I don't think it'll be inundated.

But that's just my take and I'm happy to participate in the conversations.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Senator Hwang.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks, Jen. This program currently exists for all UConn schools and state universities, is that correct?

JEN WIDNESS: That's correct.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): And this proposal is looking to include all the independent colleges.

JEN WIDNESS: Well, we heard this morning -- the language in the bill looks like it's almost going back a little bit to give DOT the authority to create the U-Pass program in the first place.
And maybe set up some parameters that OPM might want to be able to more engage some of the pricing and some of the program features.

So it looked -- it sounded like this morning that U-Pass may look at little differently moving forward. I don't know -- I mean the Committee may be able to say otherwise but in terms of in particular this limits ridage to off-peak and there was -- it seemed like perhaps next year off-peak might be that what rail is offered to the U-Pass students currently.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): The reason I said that is I think you have two microphones on. I think that's a key point is you might be going backwards on this, right? Where we actually have to go through OPM as a review process for any change to the U-Pass program.

Is that what you would read it? That's the way I would read it.

JEN WIDNESS: I have the sense that OPM is really supportive of expanding U-Pass to the colleges and supportive of the program. But I think that as the conversation around cost and transportation continue to evolve, that they wanna be conscientious of not, you know, approving a program that may or may not be causing a revenue loss in the state.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): but the revenue loss may be something that we can use to attract declining enrollment in our population to give greater flexibility. And I think the question I had is looking at UB and looking or committed to, you know, independent colleges, it could be incredibly useful as a recruitment tool for our colleges to be able to have the flexibility to offer transit throughout.
I have the experience of my son who's studying abroad right now in Europe as part of a study abroad. They are given a pass and they are given the opportunity to expand their educational experience by exploring and going throughout where the transit system can provide them.

Wouldn't that be part of an extension of a selling program of attracting quality students to come into Connecticut in the CON colleges and state university colleges?

JEN WIDNESS: Yeah, I mean I think in cities like Boston and Providence where they have these robust transportation programs. Providence, in particular, I think is the model to look at where students -- their student IDs serve as their U-Pass so right when they -- they don't have to opt in, you know, it's already set up that their student ID serves as a transportation card. I think certainly those urban hubs, right, that have robust transportation systems are certainly an attraction for many young people.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Well, one of the things you probably can't comment on it and maybe I'm increasing the dollar amount but it seems striking to me that our community colleges and our vocational schools are -- are a potential population that could greatly benefit from transport that's available to them. And do you have any idea why we didn't include them in this conversation? Or maybe it does.

JEN WIDNESS: The state universities -- they are, the community colleges and the state universities currently are part of this program. And that was sort of the impetus. I think Margo Jameson
[phonetic] really had some leadership in sort of bringing this program forward.

SENATOR HWANG (28TH): Well, great. Thank you but I just want to make a note of record on this Committee is -- is it seems like going through OPM seems to be a step backwards from an existing system that's demonstrated to be successful and viable and -- and because of its success, looking to expand but then putting another hurdle in -- in the review process seems to be counterproductive. Or counter intents to the goal.

So thank you very much for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you and I need to highlight that concern and for purpose of you being here, a lot of this is trying to determine what the most appropriate cost is for, you know, a service which is really valuable.

And if you had very limited cost per semester, access to free Metro-North, free bus service, is $20 dollars the right cost? And people were comfortable the idea maybe on off-peak but that peak hours, that's an $18 dollar train ticket and each way -- one way -- so I think people are trying to figure out -- okay, well is this subsidy a little too rich. This subsidy on top of another subsidy.

So I think, you know, we are -- we were talking to DOT about what the program should look like, how to recognize the incredible public benefits that'll be provided under this program but also contain costs in a more meaningful way.

We had those examples where on Friday nights during the semester coming on the Amtrak or Hartford Line
Rails that those buses would be filled on Friday at rush hour and people were being displaced three, four, five trains back and commuters were getting really upset, like hey, this is my only way home. We're coming home at 4:55, this is the bus that we -- this is the train we take every day and all these UConn students getting on it for free.

So we were worried about the backlash we were learning here from commuters as well. And so I think when we asked them to think creatively about how to reformat this program, they took that directive a little too extreme and now suddenly we've gotta get sign-offs by OPM which I don't think anyone wants.

So I think that's part of the conversation we're having right now.

JEN WIDNESS: Yeah, I mean if I could just comment on the cost and how we pay for this, I think we'd -- I heard the Commissioner mention like a plus, like something where like students would pay a little extra during rush hour. I think that could be, you know, something that we could talk about.

Also, in terms of the evolution of the technology, could we use student IDs and could schools just pay a cost of -- could they just pay per ride and, you know, that's how it's moving into in Boston so that school's gonna offer it for their employees, etcetera, where they use their student IDs or their work IDs to pay for rides.

So anything we can do to be helpful, we're happy to have the conversation. We appreciate everyone's support on the issue.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): Well, I think we've reached consensus that maybe OPM shouldn't be signing off on all this, so --

JEN WIDNESS: I'm not -- do not quote me on that.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): It's good to reach consensus in a public hearing, that's great.

[Laughter]

Thank you, Jen, for your testimony.

JEN WIDNESS: Thank you all for your support.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): We have now concluded those who signed up from the public to testify. If there's anyone from the public who wishes to testify that has not signed up, please see our Clerk and we'll add you on to that public list.

For now we're moving towards back to public officials. We have Representative Buckbee followed by Representative Rochelle.

REP. BUCKBEE (67TH): Well, good afternoon. It's been a busy afternoon here in Transportation. I thought the cheers at first were just for you guys but I wasn't entirely sure. Yeah.

So like many others today, I'm here to speak on House Bill 155. As I come in front of you each year and talk about trains -- this'll be my fourth time coming before this committee. And I guess I kind of liked -- I've submitted all the paperwork, all the fun stuff so this -- I was like sitting here reading back, I'd like to actually take a second to talk to you.

I learned a little bit sitting back here today. How many people are after the same kinda thing? And I
heard words like ignored. I heard fairness. Right? With some other areas.

So I have a quick little story for you -- 1971. I'm not gonna ask everyone to raise their hands where they were in 1971 because I'm sure some weren't even here, right?

So 1971 the last train ran through New Milford. People talk about the southern part of the state, central part of the state -- we're kind of the forgotten part of the state.

So in 1971 the train stopped running for -- we still had freight running through our town, doesn't stop in our town. But to have a commuter train, we didn't have one. We haven't had one since 1971. It was strong for us. And the reason it's gone, in 1971 was to help prepare the rest of the state. The money went to Route 8 and Merritt Parkway.

Money went to 95 and 91, right? All this -- all these dollars shifted from the western part of the state in New Milford to help the rest of the state which everyone was all for it.

And now the rest of these train stations pop up and they're useful and everyone needs them and people said -- oh, so New Milford wants in the game now.

I spoke with -- I guess a former colleague to some was long before I got her. Jeannie Garvey, right? She was here in the mid-80's. Jeannie was fighting for the same thing. So within about 15 years of the train leaving to Milford, we tried to get back on track, so to speak. Puns are always intended, by the way.
We're trying to get right back on track and we've been asking ever since. So I've gone to speak with the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council, the Commission of the DOT, DECD, Governor Lamont. Last year I stood in his home and shook his hand, said, "I'm not gonna let go of your hand until we talk about trains." And it was Valentine's Day, he was very sweet.

So my question, I said, is what do we need to do to take this next step? We've been talking about it, we've done studies, we're talking about 16 miles away from Danbury. We have our people leaving to go over to New York State to jump on the train there. We're losing all that opportunity.

We see that this works. And I see or hear everybody else. I see how it works for everybody. It's fantastic. Everyone's benefitting. It's a great thing for the state. We wanna get in the game. Or we've been asking for almost 50 years to get back in the game.

So be it fairness or ignored -- I don't care about words like that. We want to see our communities all grow. We have a great tourism industry up through New Milford and I'd like to see our people not have to go to New York State to get on a train. And I don't care if it's a hand car, pump car -- give us a Kalamazoo, we'll get it started. Really know what a Kalamazoo, I had to look that one up, it was kinda fun to say. That's the old pump cars, old Kalamazoo. We'll take what we can get.

Now when I sat in front of the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council, I heard people talk about needing new cars and needing new platforms and they do. I get it, right? But it's almost like me sitting here
with a -- with a ham under each arm and crying I have no bread, you know. That's what I keep feeling from the other side of that. All these other organ -- these other communities who are saying -- hey, we've got trains but we need faster trains and we need more platform or we need more space.

We just want a train. So I need to know what the next step -- this is my question. We'd love to be part of this bill. I've seen the studies go through since 1985. I have a bunch of them, a guy dropped off boxes of them he's been collecting since 1985.

I'd like to know what the next step I can do to help get this train down the track a little bit. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): I'm tempted to provide a series of answers for you. [Clears throat] But I will refrain. [Laughter]

Are there questions for Representative Buckbee? Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): So we'll have a conversation. So I appreciate you coming out and advocating and appreciate your comments and there's obviously a lot of needs but certainly your comments were well made and well received. So thank you very much.

REP. BUCKBEE (67TH): Thank you, Representative. The one thing I wanted to throw in there for you, too, last ten years, anybody have an idea how much money's been spent on rail in this -- in the state? Ballpark. No? About $4.6 billion dollars. How much of that's gone to western Connecticut? That's the question.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): Seeing none, thank you, Representative Buckbee. I just -- one question. You had what I would consider -- I drove up there into New Milford about two years ago now for -- I forget what I was up there for -- but it was an incredible small town that I'd never been to in my life. It looked really active downtown, densely populated, a lot going on and I can certainly see how those types of towns that would benefit more from greater connections to the rail and in out of our cities.

So I just want to say having never been to New Milford until relatively recently, I probably wouldn't have recognized the opportunity myself.

So I do appreciate you coming forward, speaking on behalf of your citizens and report. Senator Leone has a question as well.

REP. BUCKBEE (67TH): Thank you.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and good to see you, Representative.

REP. BUCKBEE (67TH): You as well.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Question for you. I was in New Milford not too long ago, probably about a -- maybe like two or three months ago and prior to that it had been a while so I -- in my mind, I got to see what it used to be like, a sleepy little town to now, you know, a bustling growing town with, you know, big box stores -- Home Depot and the shopping malls and some of the other stores along the corridor there.

So I guess the question is, maybe you can provide to us and maybe you with DOT's assistance down the road
with what will it take? You know, how -- what's the growth been in the past say five, ten years and what the current projections are. I would think you also have the Danbury spillover as people are going northward.

So if we can see what that trend line is maybe we can start to think about what it would take if we can get to where you want us to be. So some of that data could be helpful.

REP. BUCKBEE (67TH): Thank you, Senator, that's actually really helpful for me to come back with what you're in need for. New Milford has grown tremendously. I'm fourth generation New Milford so I've seen a huge piece in my lifetime. But we are, to the good Representative's comment that we're such a small town, we've got a little more sleepy since the train went away. But we are still -- a lot of people don't know this and I'll brag about this all day -- we are the largest township in the state of Connecticut with over 61 square miles. It's a big place.

There are four fire houses -- or three companies, four houses in our town. It's a big place. And there's a lot of people. Lot of things going on, some good business, some large manufacturing we have there now. And more people. More and more people. Love to see that train come in so we can be less a sleepy town and give that boom that frankly the rail offers a lot of other communities we've been looking for.

But I invite you both. Next time you come to town, give me a call. Let me know, we've got two new breweries in town, it's fantastic.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): I hate to tell you why I was in New Milford the last time I was there.

REP. BUCKBEE (67TH): I'm guessing it didn't work.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): With a little bit of work, yes. So with that, thank you very much, Representative Buckbee.

REP. BUCKBEE (67TH): Thank you very much.


REP. ROCHELLE (104TH): My apologies. So Chairman Lemar and Chairman Leone, I come today to speak with you with Rick Dunn who is the Director of the Valley -- Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments.

I wanna share with you all a little bit about my specific district. You heard from my colleagues about -- very passionately -- about all of the different ways that the Waterbury Train Line will have huge economic impact on the region from the top up in Waterbury and even beyond to places like Torrington down through. And I want to share with you the story of what's happening with Ansonia and Derby because I think it's a really important one and it explains the urgency of needing these train lines.

For those that don't know, the Waterbury Train Line has three of the top five most economically distressed municipalities in the state of Connecticut. Ansonia, which is my district, is number one. Waterbury is number two and Derby is number five. I want to congratulate Pete Hess, who is Mayor Hess has moved Naugatuck from number 19 to
number 24 so they're going in the right direction on this issue out of 169 municipalities.

And what does it mean to be a distressed municipality? From my residence, it means that the towns are doing more with less. We have had difficulty growing our grand list and when you look at what the trains would do being in our community, it would increase property value, it would attract business. We have two developments hanging in the balance currently for our downtown and about 100 acres of land between the two downtowns that are ripe for development with interested parties. They're waiting on those trains.

That would grow our grand list, it would help us to draw taxes, invest in our schools and do the things that our mayors need to get done for our community.

I have a community -- you know, communities that have 60 percent ALICE rates and for those that don't know, that stands for Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed. These are our working-class residents that are having trouble making ends meet.

So increased property tax has a real impact on their bottom line for their family in these communities. Our rate is 60 percent, the state average is 30 percent. So either you're the family having the trouble or it's your next door neighbor.

And so we have tremendous efforts for citing food and security, tremendous efforts for bringing better job training into the community. We have a wonderful manufacturing economy in our community and we actually just put in another manufacturing training center last year.
So manufacturers are deeply interested because of our historic roots of manufacturing and our current workforce in manufacturing. What we need is the trains to help bring this all together. Once those lines are up, once those developments are done, we are going to immediately see an impact in every man, woman and child in the community pretty swiftly.

So I want to express that this is an urgent matter. There's these wonderful developments that will be happening all along the lines. We have, you know, brownfield sites that are, you know, 40, 50 acres and people that are interested in developing them. And between our recent reform of the Transfer Act and these developers that are looking around and the opportunities that we had in my district, all the dominoes are lined up precisely. We're just waiting for those train lines to start -- to start running more regularly.

So with that, I would like to have Rick Dunn answer any questions that you have because he can speak more of the technical end of things as the Director of the Council of Government.

RICK DUNN: Thank you. So Chairman Lemar, Chairman Leone, ranking members Martin and Devlin, members of the committee, thank you for this time.

I have no intention of saying anything that's been said already. I just wanted to address a couple of issues, some questions that I think that primarily Senator Leone asked that I think I can maybe shed a little light on.

The Route 8 corridor, I assume everyone's familiar with it generally but from Waterbury to Bridgeport is about a 30-mile run. And the Waterbury Branch
Line runs parallel with it. At Shelton, where when we hit the Fairfield County Line, Route 8 diverts into Fairfield County through the job centers in Shelton and Trumbull. The rail line continues on to Bridgeport and they meet again in Bridgeport.

So we have an issue where each morning there's a six-to-eight mile bumper-to-bumper backup from interchange 13 in Shelton to interchange 20, 21 in Seymour.

At night from interchange 13 in Shelton back to the Merritt Parkway. And it takes about an hour to go 20 miles during that -- those parts of the day.

So my agency, which is also the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region along with the Bridgeport Valley Metropolitan Planning Region which we also co-administer. We've looked at this. We engaged in this study of the corridor. We're in the midst of the rail and highway study.

The thing that I really wanna stress to you is the investment that this state is going to have to face in highway expansion in that corridor. Just for capacity. That bridge that crosses the Housatonic River from New Haven County to Fairfield County is a perfectly good bridge. We spend about -- you spend about $25 million dollars every ten years on it.

But the capacity is not there. Ninety-thousand cars a day are on that highway and across -- and move across that bridge. And it's built for 40. That's why the backup excess.

So we've looked at the corridor, we've come up with this plan for rail. We actually did the original study in the -- Branch Line study that was published in 2010 that you all graciously paid for as well.
But the issue of what we're trying to create there and what we're asking for, with all due respect, Representative Buckbee, I don't feel like I have two hams and I'm looking for a loaf of bread, I feel like I have two slices of bread and I'm looking for a piece of ham.

So I think one of the things -- the most important thing that I can talk to you about -- Senator Leone had questions about density. Really the questions I think you were asking about the communities and their acceptance of density around TODs. So the city of Shelton, their development within the state TOD of the Derby Shelton station is about 200 units per acre. In Derby the just approved 100 units per acre in the TOD. The Ansonia project is going to be similar, 100 to 150 units per acre in that area.

All the way up the line, it's the same story. The Haynes Development will probably not be quite that dense, it'll be a little more spread out but -- but there's -- there's an appetite for this type of density and this type of development in these communities. So and it's been demonstrated by those communities already.

I think the last thing I'll leave you with is the -- there's a question about investment. Representative Devlin asked about DECD and the involvement. So DECD is very involved in these communities already. The city of Derby in the Representative's district has a $5 million dollar grant from DECD to develop their downtown plan alongside what will be a $20 million dollar improvement of Route 34 which is Main Street.

The city of Ansonia has a planning grant from the state, from DECD as well to work on that -- the
conversion and adaptive reuse of their areas. My agency has also administered brownfield funds for the last 20 years that's leveraged about $70 million dollars in new investment.

So those are the facts and figures around it. If there are any additional questions, I'll be happy to answer them.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Representative Rochelle for coming here today and thank you, Mr. Dunn for coming here. I know you were here last year as well and I appreciated greatly your testimony last year as well.

And thank you for being a voice on transportation policy and transportation issues in Naugatuck Valley for a good while now. It is deeply appreciated and you bring a lot to the table when we talk about economic development, transportation options and what we can do in Naugatuck Valley. We had a lot of boosters here earlier. I know you saw a lot of that but it's good to have someone that we can talk to on a day-to-day basis about issues that you guys are confronting. So it's appreciated.

RICK DUNN: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative Reyes.

REP. REYES (75TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. And Mr. Dunn and Representative Rochelle, thank you very much for your advocacy and thank you very much for waiting all day.

That was an impressive list of folks that came up from the valley and it just speaks to a corridor that I guess we can all say has been underserved. And it's -- I'm happy for that you're advocating and
I said earlier I did want to compliment Representative Rochelle because from the minute I met her, when she first came in here on day one, she came in talking about the Waterbury Line and I -- I don't forget those conversations and I didn't forget that you brought it up and I thank you for your passion and I'm hoping that this is the year that we continue growth and prosperity for that corridor because I think it -- I guess we're all gonna see what Mayor Hess has lined now by the [Inaudible 04:51:05], huh?

As far as Mr. Dunn, you've been at this for some time and my question to you is over the years there have been many promises for this area and many dollars. Was there ever a time when we had a -- a plan ready to roll out for the greater Waterbury area going down the corridor? Did we ever -- were we ever at this threshold before and do we have dollars attached to that plan?

RICK DUNN: Hmm, I don't think that we've ever been at this level of discussion with the administration, the communities and the legislature. I think that's -- through you, Mr. Chair -- that is the answer to your question.

We have a -- we have an opportunity here to continue to bring people together and you know, while some of them have been talking about this for two decades, the community is there now. The people who are working in these communities are there.

You know, the Naugatuck Valley provides a large proportion of the Fairfield County workforce. It was alluded to earlier but the need to move these -- for the state of Connecticut, the need to move these people between where they can afford to live in the
Naugatuck Valley and where there are working jobs maybe making $80,000, $90,000, $100,000 a year in Fairfield County, that is an incredibly large piece of Connecticut's economy and we have not done much to make that ride any smoother.

Twenty years ago when we started on this, it was a one-hour commute from roughly Naugatuck to Stamford. Today it's almost three by car. So that's what we're up against. And if we wanna grow, if we want to continue to grow that area and grow the Naugatuck Valley downtowns, which I don't mean to take a lot of time but we have -- this is a better deal for the taxpayers, not just spending the money on rail instead of highway but because the infrastructure's already there. There's an incredibly mature infrastructure that was built throughout these downtowns which really function as a linear city.

From Shelton up to Torrington, it's one community with a few stops along the line. The infrastructure's there -- sewers, water, gas, electric -- it's all built in. We're not -- we're not facing large offsite development costs here. That's why the developers have been at our door. Because these deals pencil -- if we get brownfields done which we've done a pretty good job with. We get transportation, the deal's penciled.

REP. REYES (75TH): And if I could, through the Chair. The conversation -- similar line of questioning turned into the environmental and having environmental oppose -- opposition for some of these territories.

I was impressed with the presentation the young lady brought in from Haynes here and -- in your experience and your years in the COG and therefore,
gut feel for, I mean the people who really enjoy the valley for its nature.

RICK DUNN: Well, as opposition to any kind of expansion or growth of this region. I don't think any of the areas we're looking at along the rail line would foster that kind of opposition.

The rail line interfaces with the industrial history in the urban centers. When you get to the Haynes, so called Haynes Parcel, so there's a large area of that that's in the floodway but you know, it's above -- above sea level but in the floodway. That is going to be recreational area and as, I think, Cathy Ekstrom mentioned we have a 47-mile greenway plan from Derby to Torrington. Actually to Winchester.

Those sections are getting built out piece-by-piece but this will be a huge section of that that will be a focus part of that.

REP. REYES (75TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your advocacy, guys.


SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): So you mentioned quite your densities at 100 per acre. That's a lot.

RICK DUNN: Yep.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): So how much in this area are you anticipating on developing?

RICK DUNN: So Shelton Planning and Zoning has approved -- I think they've approved up to 650 units total so far. Derby approved an application recently for 110, they're still in their planning process but the capacity there is probably around 300 units in TOD. And I'm just talking in the TOD
area, the half-mile circle designated by statute around the stations.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Are we talking about the Haynes parcel here?

RICK DUNN: No. No, no, no. We're talking about the downtown Derby [crosstalk] interchanges -- interchange of Route 8 and 34. You know, in Derby you have 8, 34, the rail station the CT Transit bus line and the GBTA bus line. They all meet in the same place at the Derby rail station, the existing rail station. And this is in that -- within that half mile ring, it's actually their main street.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): So we're looking at over a thousand units in that area.

RICK DUNN: I would -- I would say up to -- up to Ansonia the potential is -- Shelton, Derby, Ansonia -- probably in the neighborhood of a thousand is not out of -- out of the question.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): And absorption rates?

RICK DUNN: So we're gonna happy to share with you the corridor study. We hired AE Com and CDM Smith to work on. So we have -- we lay out in their demand side the number of units to be built out. About 5.2 million square feet of commercial mixed use space. So it's all laid out on the study and there is some demand side evidence there.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you both very much for testimony today and you didn't bring visuals but I think I finally got a lay of the land that you're talking about here and I appreciate it.

REP. ROCHELLE (104TH): No but I would be happy to send along a link. I have a really great series of
photographs from a photographer that's called Brass Valley, it's a book that's printed and it shows all of our old buildings at, you know, the Ansonia brass site with these beautiful brick structures that are currently not in use and our old opera houses, our downtown walkways. We have an extremely walkable downtown. And this is the type of thing that, you know, young people, retirees -- everyone wants to live along these walkable communities now.

And so we're right at that precipice and I'd be happy to share the beautiful photos of our downtowns with you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you. Kevin Moynihan followed by Senator Logan.

KEVIN MOYNIHAN: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I appreciate the -- this time to speak to you. I will be brief because I didn't know I was going to be speaking today and when I arrived at 9:30 this morning for a meeting with my Senators and Representatives, Mr. O'Dea asked me to stick around and speak so I'm happy to be here.

I am the First Selectman of New Canaan. I've been First Selectman for the last two years. I ran, in part, on the problem block and commuter parking in New Canaan and believe it or not, New Canaan has problems. And I'm here to speak on S.B. 155 because New Canaan very definitely needs help with our transportation Metro-North service.

I'm a resident of New Canaan for 39 years, I'm a retired corporate attorney who commuted to Manhattan for 29 years. About 29 years on Metro-North so I know something about the commuting experience.
As a bedroom community of New York City, Metro-North is an economic lifeline for New Canaan and hundreds of residents of North Stamford, Wilton, Norwalk and the towns of Bembridge and Scotts Corners in New York, hundreds of -- about 2500 New Canaan residents commute to Manhattan for high-paying jobs. Several hundred commute from surrounding towns and they park in New Canaan's two train stations.

When I commuted on the New Canaan Branch Line, the time from New Canaan to Grand Central Terminal was one hour and seven minutes. It is now one hour and 17 minutes due partly to the federally mandated slowdown of Metro-North scheduling which has really degraded our service.

As a result, New Canaan's real estate market is suffering severely. My re-val last year was down $600 million dollars. And Zillow tells us we're probably facing another 20 percent in reduction in our value of our properties in New Canaan.

So there's a real direct effect between the degradation in the Metro-North service and our real estate property values in New Canaan.

Improving Metro-North train times and frequency of trains is the number one issue facing New Canaan commuters and our local economy.

I met this morning with -- I came up this morning to talk to our Representatives and Senators about the needs of New Canaan. Representative O'Dea gave me two studies from 2003 and 2010 and we've been looking at improvements in the New Canaan Branch Line for years. We really have a critical need to address the needs for improvements. We understand S.B. 155 would give us the opportunity to plan
another -- an updated study. There's a lot going on with the changes in the Metro Line service with a new branch seven -- new track seven coming on line in Stamford and a train that will begin to go to the west side in the next two years.

So I urge the committee to seriously look at funding, recommending funding for the study that we need to improve the transportation to New Canaan, to the Branch Line and the hundreds of commuters in our surrounding communities.

Thank you. I'd be happy to answer questions.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you, Mr. Moynihan, for your testimony today and for sticking with us most of the afternoon. It is greatly appreciated; I know Representative O'Dea had to convince you to stick around and I appreciate it because it is good to get as many voices as possible here to help us frame the importance of these issues for our constituents. So thank you.

KEVIN MOYNIHAN: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative O'Dea.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you Mr. Moynihan for coming up and staying here until after 4:00 when I told you it would be around 12:00 or 1:00. And I apologize to you.

But the latest numbers I have in New Canaan Branch Line -- the New Haven Line itself is the busiest commuter corridor in the country for rail, correct?

So over 40 million rides. And the New Canaan Branch Line is the number one branch line at 1.5, 1.6 million rides. The next closest is Danbury at
780,000 rides and the next closest after that is Waterbury at 340,000 rides.

So the vast majority is the New Canaan, Stamford, Darien line as far as branch lines. Is that your understanding as well?

KEVIN MOYNIHAN: Yes.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And so I mean it's a traumatic amount of people, not just from New Canaan but all the surrounding communities and you said it what's boxcar as a commuter lot way to get parking spaces, I understand, correct?

KEVIN MOYNIHAN: Well, we fortunately found a technology company in New Jersey that's come in to New Canaan and I've got 100 new parking spaces at no cost town because we're taking the Catholic Church one block away and two other properties and so there's ways to use technology today to solve your problems.

But the biggest problem we have is the degradation of the service on the Metro-North line.

REP. O'DEA (125TH): And you found, though, that there's a large percentage of out-of-towners coming to Stamford, Darien and New Canaan for -- well [Inaudible 05:03:40] we have 1200 customers -- 600 of them are not from New Canaan.

So you know, we know the demand is there, we had the demand before. We had a seven-year wait list for our downtown train station. When I moved here 39 years ago, it was an eight-year wait list but you know, so people -- people drive to Darien and other stations but it's really become a huge problem for our real estate market.
REP. LEMAR (96TH): Well, thank you very much for coming up here and testifying. I know we didn't have as many numbers as the Waterbury Branch Line but we do have as many -- we have a lot more riders and I do appreciate the Chair's entertaining this testimony and our concerns. Thank you very much, Mr. Moynihan. Thank you for your time.

Representative Devlin has a question as well.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): Thank you, Mr. Moynihan, thank you for waiting out with us to nearly wrap things up this afternoon.

But one of the challenges in Fairfield County as -- which has always been the largest contributor in terms of income tax and tax revenues overall to the entire state of Connecticut. And as we're losing wealth, it is having a potential impact.

Do you know -- do you see that in New Canaan? Is there a change that you're aware of in terms of, you know, people choosing to stay or go and live in New Canaan?

Part of it has to do, I believe, with their ability to commute to jobs in New York City.

KEVIN MOYNIHAN: Part of the problem, we're losing New York City residents who are looking to move out to the suburbs and we're losing it to communities on the mainline because the time to New Canaan is longer.

But that's affecting Wilton actually worse than it's affecting New Canaan. But the other thing, we're losing residents like crazy to Florida and other southern states because of the tax situation. So I think Representative O'Dea has statistics. In the
past New Canaan residents spent about $200 million dollars a year to Hartford and that is going down because of our loss of wealthy residents.

REP. DEVLIN (134TH): We're seeing a big influx in Fairfield as well from people from New York. I think it used to be that there were very low house prices in West Chester County but the property taxes were really high. Connecticut had the appeal of -- well, first being Connecticut -- and high house prices but very low property taxes and we're starting to see those things shift. And it makes -- it's more appealing then or easier for people to move into -- into Connecticut.

So thank you, I appreciate you sharing your input on the New Canaan Line, all these branch lines are important and as the commissioner said, look forward to some robust discussions about how the whole thing comes together. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Good to hear from you, Mr. Moynihan, great to have you. Thanks for sticking around for all these hours. I know we would've liked to have gotten you there early because we know the commute -- I know the commute quite well, how long it takes to get home so appreciate you sticking around.

You've got a great advocate with Representative O'Dea so he is a voice of reason -- sometimes no -- but usually. So I'm sure he'll be advocating on your behalf quite strongly.

And you probably heard all the requests for rails so what we have to figure out is what we can do and where to best put our dollars. But I like the fact
that the numbers you've shown, you know, we have the most ridership so from that perspective, that holds well so hopefully we can make some progress.

So I just wanted to say thanks for taking the time to stick around and offer your comments and we'll take it from there. Thank you.

[Crosstalk]

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Have a good trip back.

KEVIN MOYNIHAN: Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Senator Logan with Representative Klarides-Ditra. After that we have Representative Bolinsky signed up and then that's the last of the public officials.

SENATOR LOGAN (17TH): Good afternoon, Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, all the other Representatives and Senators here.

It's a pleasure to be here. State Senator George Logan. I come here in support of Senate Bill 155, also I submitted testimony along with Senators Kelly, Senator Miner and Senator Berthel as well. I'm just gonna summarize this a little bit.

What we're looking at here is we're looking for this bill to pass so that we can [background noise]. And you know, we're looking at a study, right, to take a look at this to hopefully develop an action plan to move forward. There's lots of moving parts here that we're dealing with.

But the enhancements to rail infrastructure in our region is so vitally important for various reasons.

You know, this bill moving forward would be a big step towards modernizing our public transportation
system here in the valley. You've heard others speak of the 19 cities and towns that are involved centered around Waterbury.

You take a look at the annual ridership of the Waterbury line and it's increased from 178,000 in 2004 to over 345,000 last year. So folks are utilizing the rail and that is why I think you're finding town CEOs and legislators are hearing more and more from people that want more from the lines. They want more service because folks want to utilize it.

And you know, as was mentioned earlier before, you know, over the next 20 years or so, we're expecting in the area -- our area -- the population to increase. We're looking at an aging population who's trying to get out of driving in cars and public transportation, rail is important.

Also when you take a look at the issues that we're facing in terms of infrastructure deterioration, rail services being underutilized, a lot of this can be handled by focusing on the Waterbury rail line and providing the necessary resources.

You know, it's been said before and known that we're looking for locomotives, right? We're looking at not just all new locomotives but also rehabbing some existing, purchasing some new ones, increasing service frequency and amenities are important, right? We want seats that are comfortable. We want the rails, the trains to look nice and clean and attractive to folks.

And why is this important? Investing in the Waterbury Branch Line will spur the economic development, it will revitalize our town centers,
increase property and land values which I'm sure most municipalities would love to hear, right?

Less congestion, more reliable freight and goods movement and improved health and safety. Less folks on the roads, congestion on roads, more folks using public mass transportation is a good thing. I'll see the rest of my time to the call.

REP. KLARIDES-DITRIA (105TH): Thank you, Senator. Thank you everybody for having us here today. I'm sorry I wasn't able to jump in earlier but as you can hear, I was over at public health and I need to get back there soon.

The Waterbury Rail Line is very important to the Naugatuck Valley, as you've heard numerous people -- legislators talk about it today. It's for the development and for the good of the community. It will bring money into our area, it'll bring money into the Lower Naugatuck Valley, the Naugatuck Valley, the Waterbury area and then to the state of Connecticut.

And that's our jobs. That's our jobs as legislators, to do what we can to bring people and money into the state of Connecticut. Grow our state, grow our economy and move it -- move it forward as much as possible.

So please, we hope you support our bill today and move it forward. Thank you very much.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Thank you both for your testimony and thank you for making it out to 4:20 today. I know that there's a lot of interest in the Waterbury Rail Line, evidenced by the number of people who were wanting to testify, the First
Selectmen up and down the corridor who came here as well.

It was an impressive showing, no doubt. The reason we have this bill before us largely is for us to try to evaluate what is necessary along our branch lines and make the cognizant determinations of where our limited resources can be invested to grow.

We all believe that the investments in transportation pay off. We've seen it up and down our rail lines throughout the mainline, throughout the Hartford New Haven expansion, throughout the CTfastrak. We're seeing TOD take the hold literally everywhere we put a transit asset, growth has followed.

That was central to the arguments we've had about transportation the last few years and that's going to continue. We still have a hard portion of that conversation to have. We haven't quite reached a consensus on how to achieve this vision that we all share and I think we're going to spend the time over the next few weeks and months trying to get to that point.

So I appreciate your willingness to help organize so many people, so many leaders across the state to come up and help share their vision for a more robust and more transit-friendly Naugatuck Valley.

SENATOR LEONE (27TH): Yeah, thank you all for the work you're doing. Really appreciate it. Thank you.

REP. LEMAR (96TH): Representative Bolinsky is the last person signed up on our list. Is there anyone who wished to testify before the committee today has not had the opportunity to do so.
Seeing none, we are adjourned. Thank you so much.
Our next public hearing is on Friday.