

Statement:

Representative Lamar, Senator Cassano and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee:

My name is James C. Furlong, and I live in Mystic, CT. I am offering written testimony in support of: **HOUSE BILL NUMBER 5423**

AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXPANSION OF PASSENGER TRAIN AND GROUND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN EASTERN CONNECTICUT.

It is exciting to learn that far-seeing legislators of the Joint Transportation Committee have submitted a bill to study, among other matters, extending affordable commuter rail service to Rhode Island from Groton and Stonington. The same bill also would examine a new Norwich Branch Line and extend ground transportation in Eastern Connecticut to interconnect the systems.

As a 20+ year resident of Mystic, I've been steadily disappointed by the following situation: I have a reasonably priced connection via Shore Line East with stations to the south—including New Haven, Stamford and New York—but I'm forced to take my life into my hands by driving I-95 or paying exorbitant prices on Amtrak to reach Providence and Boston. This is a drawback for the region for both residents and visitors.

As a conservationist, I see many advantages to improved rail transportation. It would reduce traffic flow and accidents on roads, cut greenhouse gases and support transit-oriented development that discourages sprawl.

As a taxpayer, I would welcome moves that make it easier for companies to hire and retain workers.

You may well be criticized for spending money. However, to my knowledge, most or all of the world's commuter railroads operate at a

deficit when that's assessed in narrow terms. However, the trains' economic benefit outweighs any simple counting of beans.

I urge passage of House Bill 5423 and expanded passenger rail service for eastern Connecticut. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Feb. 17, 2021

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