

Testimony
HOUSE BILL NUMBER 5423
AN ACT CONCERNING THE EXPANSION OF PASSENGER TRAIN AND
GROUND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN EASTERN CONNECTICUT

February 19, 2021

Senator Cassano, Representative Lamar, Senator Somers,
Representative Carney and Members of the Transportation Committee:

My name is Jessie Stratton. I live in Groton, Connecticut and am a member of the town's Resiliency and Sustainability Task Force (GRSTF). I submit this testimony in support of Proposed House Bill 5423 that directs the CT Department of Transportation to undertake a feasibility study of expanding passenger rail service in southeast Connecticut. The GRSFT has spent a significant amount of time considering the many benefits of providing better public transit options to serve residents, tourists, and perhaps most significantly commuters to Electric Boat, Pfizer and the US Naval Base.

Such service would significantly reduce the heavy traffic on I 95, US Route 1 and Route 12, Route 184 (the Gold Star Highway) and numerous other local roadways. In addition, extension of Shoreline East to Westerly R.I. with stops in Groton, Mystic and Stonington would offer commuters, tourists and residents a convenient way to connect with Amtrak's heavily patronized northeast rail service between New York and Boston.

In addition to the Shoreline East expansion, CT DOT is directed to study the feasibility of establishing new passenger rail service along the eastern shore of the Thames River to connect Electric Boat and Pfizer to the Naval Base.

Much of the basic infrastructure to provide these services exists and extending and enhancing it would dramatically reduce congestion and importantly GHG emissions from vehicles. Transportation emissions are the state's largest contributor to global warming and climate change and these emissions will further increase as Electric Boat plans to add

up to 12,00 new employees in the years ahead. As of now there are already close to 30,000 commuters on these roads in Groton.

In sum, undertaking a review of the feasibility and desirability of increasing passenger rail service is consistent with the state's environmental and economic goals and I think the outcome of evaluations would make the many benefits of building out this service abundantly clear.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support to passage of PHB 5423.

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