

**Re: HB 5255 AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Co-Chair Lemar, Co-Chair Haskell, Ranking Member Carney, Ranking Member Somers, and members of the Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. My name is Joe Sculley, I am President of the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut (MTAC), representing small business trucking companies in the State of Connecticut.

MTAC submits comments on Section 4, Section 13, Section 18, and Section 21 of this bill.

SECTION 4 – OPPOSE – (LOWER) SPEED LIMITS DURING WEATHER EVENTS

It is hard to see how this is feasible at this point. The New Jersey Turnpike has electronic speed limit signs, so they can adjust their speed limits to slower speeds during inclement weather. Connecticut does not have electronic speed limit signs. The language does include the caveat “provided the commissioner erects signs indicating such speed limit.” How would they do that without electronic speed limit signs? I doubt that ConnDOT has enough mobile electronic highway signs to place one under every speed limit sign on an affected highway. Even if they did, that would take an incredible amount of work to place these mobile signs to announce a speed limit that would be in place for a few hours. It would also likely compromise the safety of individuals who would do this work, since it would be happening during a time when vehicles are driving on the highway during inclement weather.

Does ConnDOT propose to place electronic speed limit signs in place of all fixed speed limit signs? If so, what is the estimated cost of this?

SECTION 13 – INCREASED TRANSMITTAL FEE FOR OVERDIMENSIONED MOVES

ConnDOT proposes to increase the transmittal fee charged with each over-dimensioned permit by 140%.

As the proposal from ConnDOT noted, the trucking industry has, in fact, been pushing for automated issuance of overweight permits for some time. The time for this time-saving technology to be used in Connecticut may finally be near. We understand it is expensive.

I understand that part of the cost of initial implementation of the IT program will be covered by a grant from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), which is great news. It is also my understanding that the remainder of the cost of initial implementation will be paid for through existing funds. It is reportedly the cost of the required maintenance in the subsequent years that will require additional funds through the increase in the transmittal fee.



This significant increase in the transmittal fee might be more palatable if additional benefits were provided in return. Specifically, MTAC members have been seeking the ability to move over-dimensioned loads (mostly overweight) loads at night. That is currently prohibited, and I'm not aware of a good reason why.

Allowing over-dimensioned loads to move at night would benefit all road users. There is less traffic at night, which would benefit the trucking company. Passenger car drivers who drive during the day would benefit because for every over-dimensioned move that happens at night, that's one less large vehicle they need to worry about sharing the road with during their daily commute.

We respectfully request that the legislature consider various tweaks to this proposal. Either a.) Have "superloads" (those over 200,000 pounds) pay a higher transmittal fee and engineering fee so that overweight loads under that threshold see a smaller increase in the transmittal fee, b.) allow night moves of over dimensioned loads, or c.) some combination of these two alternatives.

SECTION 18 – TRUCK PLATOONING

MTAC is pleased to see the State pursuing legislation designed to promote the use of advanced technologies that will improve safety and fuel efficiency.

Truck platooning is a technology that some in the industry believed showed promise a number of years ago. However, I must admit that I am not aware of any fleets that are using truck platooning technology, nor am I aware of any that plan to use it. A few years ago, Daimler declared that "[there is no business case for truck platooning.](#)"

Additionally, if motor carriers are required to provide a plan for truck platooning 15 days before every time they plan to use the technology, that would likely render truck platooning unusable. Motor carriers are not going to know where they need their equipment to be more than two weeks in the future.

With that said, if ConnDOT wants the legislature to pass this pro-platooning legislation, we won't object.

SECTION 21 – SUPPORT – HIGHWAY BETWEEN DANBURY AND NORWALK

MTAC supports the study of potentially creating a limited access highway between Danbury and Norwalk. We believe creation of a new limited access highway would improve the movement of both intrastate, and interstate, freight in Connecticut. More than 98% of freight in Connecticut is transported by truck. Giving trucks (and passenger cars) more highway infrastructure would mean more options. This is one tool that could be used to reduce congestion. If drivers know there is congestion ahead on the highway they are currently on, they could potentially use this new limited access highway to seek an alternate route, depending on their final destination.

Thank you for your consideration.

ABOUT CT Trucking Industry

85.8%: number of Connecticut communities that depend exclusively on trucks to move their goods

98.4%: Percent of freight in Connecticut that is transported by truck

\$3.5 billion: total trucking industry wages paid in Connecticut (2019)

62,990: trucking industry jobs in Connecticut (2019)

\$56,133: average annual salary in trucking industry in Connecticut (2019)

\$8,722: average annual CT-imposed highway user fees paid by tractor trailers

\$8,906: average annual fed-imposed highway user fees paid by tractor trailers