

Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1083

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TRANSPORTATION CARBON BUDGET FOR THE

Title: STATE.

Vote Date: 3/10/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/27/2023

File No.: 251

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Transportation Committee

Co-Sponsors

Rep. David Michel, 146th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Many state residents are concerned about the environment, particularly regarding the effect of greenhouse gas emissions on the planet's climate. This bill would limit the greenhouse gas emissions of the state's transportation sector by establishing a transportation carbon budget for the state.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

Substitute language was added setting when the Commissioner of Transportation would be required to submit an annual report to the General Assembly pertaining to matters relating to transportation and the environment.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Garrett Eucalitto, Commissioner of CTDOT

The Commissioner states that the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) recognizes that emissions from vehicles remain the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions produced in Connecticut and the CTDOT has taken a proactive approach taking several efforts to start addressing our own carbon footprint. This includes the CTDOT recently installing 25 dual-headed electric vehicle charging stations at the Newington headquarters, further plans to install additional EV charging stations at CTDOT offices and maintenance garages across the state and have incorporated EVs into our agency fleet of vehicles. CTDOT also continues to pursue solar arrays and is coordinating with CT Green Bank to execute power purchase agreements for both our headquarters building and the Hamden bus facility. CTDOT is also in the process of developing a Carbon Reduction

Strategy under the federal Carbon Reduction Program included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which will help to identify projects and strategies tailored to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from on-road sources. At the same time, CTDOT is investing in complete streets across the state, reducing vehicle travel lanes, and making it safer and easier for residents to travel outside of a motor vehicle. He says establishing a system to measure GHG emissions from each “project” will impact thousands of projects annually and be a major undertaking that will require significant resources dedicated to research, study, and development of new processes and modeling abilities prior to implementation. Going further he states, “This proposed rule establishing a GHG performance measure would also require state DOTs and MPOs to biennially report on their progress in meeting the targets and require FHWA to assess significant progress toward achieving the targets. While CTDOT supports this rulemaking, the final rule is currently pending, and CTDOT believes it is critical to receive final guidance from FHWA. The details and methodology to incorporate GHG emissions into federally accepted modeling and federally mandated performance measures should be understood prior to expending time and resources to develop a GHG measurement methodology. Moving forward on such a major undertaking without federal guidance and models would risk the Department’s having to duplicate efforts and result in potential re-work and lack of alignment with other states. CTDOT, therefore, recommends that the initial progress reporting date to the joint standing committee be extended from January 1, 2024, to January 1, 2025.” He also says, “the Department requests that exclusions for the definitions of transportation projects are extended beyond those that are necessary for safety reasons or maintenance to also align with projects that are currently exempt in the federal regulations from regional Air Quality Conformity under 40 CFR §§ 93.126, 93.127 and 93.128. 40 CFR § 93.126 includes projects that are administrative or minor in nature and which do not typically cause an adverse impact on air quality, such as safety projects (e.g., railroad crossings, shoulder improvements, pavement markings, reconstructing bridges), and mass transit projects such as purchasing of vehicles and operating equipment. 40 CFR § 93.127 includes projects that are currently exempt from regional emissions analysis if they meet the criteria in 40 CFR § 93.123(b)(1) and includes projects such as intersection and interchange improvements and changes in alignment that do not add capacity. 40 CFR § 93.128 applies to traffic signal synchronization projects where the TIP is within air quality conformity.” He also requests clarification that this proposed bill intends to collect only CO2 budget inventories since CO2 only makes up 79% of emissions as there are 3 other greenhouse gasses that also contribute to emissions including methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases. He also emphasizes that “the extensive public outreach outlined, coupled with anticipated consultant fees and internal staff hours, will require additional funding that the Department does not currently have available or budgeted. Efforts will include, but are not limited to, the need to gather additional data to support the expansion of our Travel Demand and Air Quality Modeling processes to meaningfully develop the Carbon Budget.”

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Aziz Dehkan, Executive Director of Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs

Supports this bill and developing a carbon budget for the transportation sector in Connecticut. They state, “Transportation is a leading source of greenhouse gas emissions and a sector where we can dramatically reduce emissions through electrification and mode shift. Public participation and stakeholder engagement will be critical in reducing a plan that meets the

needs of our state. A carbon budget will help guide sector-wide emissions reductions while avoiding a narrow focus on a particular technology or solution.”

Shirley McCarthy, Yale Professor

Support this bill, stating the importance of our transportation sector to become carbon-free to mitigate climate change.

Charles J. Rothenberger Climate & Energy Attorney at Save the Sound

Supports this bill calling it critical since in Connecticut’s most recent inventory of greenhouse gas emissions, the state is currently not on track to meet its emissions reduction requirements pursuant to the Global Warming Solutions Act. They then say, “Establishing a carbon budget for the largest current source of our climate emissions will provide meaningful guidance in reducing transportation emissions and encourage a transformation in our transportation planning that will provide both environmental and public health benefits. Without a clear and consistent plan to reduce emissions from the transportation sector, and a requirement to design our transportation system around those reductions, we simply won’t succeed.”

Jay Stange, Transport Hartford Academy at the Center for Latino Progress

Supports the bill saying, “I would ask that the Committee and the Commissioner connect these goals to a targeted reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled. As detailed in the comments from our Coalition below, emissions generated by cars and light trucks in Connecticut are a large portion of annual emissions. Electrifying vehicles in Connecticut, a program currently supported by state-funded rebates, should be viewed as a transitional step, not a final step toward a carbon budget. Reducing emissions by supporting public transportation and active mobility choices is a much more cost-effective step.”

Zell Steeler

Supports the bill saying it is an important step for the transportation sector to begin the necessary action needed to reduce Green House Gas emissions in the state. Stating that in Connecticut, the transportation sector is responsible for 40 percent of all GHGs. They go further suggesting, “Connecticut needs to immediately begin taking action to reduce GHG emissions and developing a “carbon budget” that sets maximum amounts of GHGs emissions permitted in the transportation sector. The dates proposed in this Bill are not appropriate. The dates for the various actions need to be greatly accelerated as climate change is upon us all, and Connecticut needs to act. Delay is no longer acceptable in Connecticut. I respectfully encourage the Bill to be amended as follows: Line 26 amended to July 1, 2024.”

The following also submitted testimony in support of SB-1083

Sharon Huttner, Commissioner of Branford Planning and Zoning

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director of the Western CT Council of Governments

Opposes this bill recommending no action stating that the bill is redundant since federal standards are currently being created on the same subject, and it possibly conflicts with federal law since the bill not only includes state projects but federal projects as well whose parameters are set by Congress.

Reported by: Nathan Vieira

Date: 3/16/2023