



Town of Fairfield

Office of the First Selectwoman

Brenda L. Kupchick
First Selectwoman
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725 Old Post Road
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February 27, 2023

Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2300
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 6745 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONSTRUCTION OF NOISE BARRIERS, A PLAN IMPLEMENTING A STATE-WIDE DECIBEL LEVEL TESTING PROGRAM AND IDLING MOTOR VEHICLES

To the Honorable Members of the Transportation Committee:

I am writing to share my strong support of raised HB 6745. For decades, residents of the Town of Fairfield have been asking for noise barriers to be erected by the State along sections of I-95 in our community as they have proven to be an effective buffer between homeowners and the highway they live adjacent to.

When the Connecticut Department of Transportation cut a substantial amount of trees along I-95 last summer, my office received numerous complaints from residents regarding safety, abundance of trees removed, and the escalation of constant loud noise. The excessive cutting of trees has unfortunately created a very negative impact on local neighborhoods and decreased their quality of life significantly, including the “deafening” noise from the highway that has impacted their sleep and inability to work from home.

For decades, trees along the highway have acted as a natural sound barrier and restricted resident’s sight lines to both the highway and the artificial lighting from the street lights that now enter many homes unabated through the night. The indiscriminate removal of trees last summer was performed abruptly and without regard for concern from our municipality, or within reason of what was needed to be trimmed for highway safety.

When I served in the State Legislature, I worked very closely with the neighbors and the DOT to ensure the quality of life for residents living near the I-95 service plazas would not be negatively impacted. I know what is possible when communications and compromise exist between the State and municipality. The recent harmful and unexpected clear cutting of trees last summer goes against a lot of the good work that was done years ago. HB 6745 will help restore much of that good work that came undone by the unprecedented tree removal.

With the influx of federal funds through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), as well as various COVID relief funds, it is my hope that some of this funding be used to address the impact of the clear cutting by erecting sound barriers and other noise mitigation measures.

Having both been involved in the legislative and budgeting process for many years, I am confident that if both the State and local municipalities work together, we can come up with a solution to restore these neighborhoods to the position that they were in before the clear cutting.

I implore you to take the positive implications of this bill into further consideration. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 6745.

Sincerely,



Brenda L. Kupchick
First Selectwoman