

Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-281

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING SERVICE CHANGES TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.

Vote Date: 3/18/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/4/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Transportation Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would require the CTDOT to hold a public hearing for rail service changes in every town that has an intermediate train station that serves a "significant" percentage of that line's ridership. This bill is intended to increase the transparency behind service changes and allow impacted communities to voice their opinions on changes. This bill follows constituent frustrations with a lack of transparency and communication with the CTDOT regarding service changes to rail lines, which may significantly impact their schedules with little warning.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Garrett Eucalitto, Commissioner, CT Department of Transportation: Eucalitto on behalf of the CTDOT offers comments on the bill. Eucalitto is concerned that the bill would require the CTDOT to "implement excessive public notice and public hearing measures for any public service change." The CTDOT is already required by the FTA to perform an equity analysis to see how major transit changes in urbanized areas of 200,000 or more people with impact equity. In the case of fare changes and some major service changes the CTDOT will currently hold a virtual public hearing before seeking approval except for seasonal changes, changes of service to accommodate special events, pilot programs, and service changes that do not meet the definition of major service change. Eucalitto is also concerned about section 1(b) as the CTDOT is already required to notify the public for fare changes, tables on fare changes are published 15 prior to the first public hearing, and there is a press release upon release of the draft SAFE analysis document. Additionally, the bill requires the CTDOT, "to list the proposed service change, a description of such change and the date it is proposed to take effect." Eucalitto notes that the CTDOT already gives this information and presentation

material to the public prior to public hearings. CTDOT also uses voluntary surveys to measure public opinion regarding policy and take feedback into account. The CTDOT is in opposition of holding in person public hearings for changes of service in municipalities with an intermediate transit station that serves a large portion of that community. Eucalitto is concerned that the language used here is too broad and that holding so many public hearings in different places is unrealistic. Eucalitto states that their current level of public outreach meets federal standards, and he believes that the CTDOT already puts a significant effort into outreach and listening to feedback from all over the state. Finally, the CTDOT notes that this bill would be a significant roadblock to even single day service changes making it impossible to change service for single day events.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Christopher Davis, VP of Public Policy, CBIA: Davis on the behalf of the CBIA voices his support of the bill stating how important service changes are for employers and how they should have opportunities to provide input on both bus and rail changes.

The following people voiced their support for the bill:

Jeffrey Babbin

Jay Strange, Transport Hartford Coordinator, Center for Latino Progress

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

No testimony in opposition was offered

Reported by: Noah Gulla

Date: 3/26/2024