

CONNECTICUT CITIZENS TRANSPORTATION LOBBY  
STATEMENT IN FAVOR OF RAIL IMPROVEMENT  
FOR TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE HEARING 2/24/09

CTL, A GRASSROOTS COALITION FOUNDED IN 2003 AND WORKING FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MASS TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES, STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE LEGISLATURE'S EFFORTS THIS SESSION IN THE AREA OF RAIL IMPROVEMENTS. MOVING BOTH PASSENGERS AND FREIGHT BY RAIL CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS—BY REDUCING AIR POLLUTION AND BY ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THESE FINANCIALLY DIFFICULT HARD TIMES.

WE PARTICULARLY WISH TO ENDORSE THREE BILLS YOU ARE CONSIDERING: PROPOSED HOUSE BILLS 5646, 5657, AND 6210.

**H.B. 5646**, AN ACT REQUIRING CONNECTICUT TO TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO ESTABLISH THE NEW ENGLAND, NEW YORK, AND NEW JERSEY INTERSTATE PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION, WOULD ENCOURAGE THE TOO OFTEN NEGLECTED PRINCIPLE OF REGIONALISM WHEN MAKING TRANSIT PLANS. COORDINATION OF THE AREAS' SCHEDULES AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS WILL LEAD TO BETTER ALTERNATIVES FOR OUR CITIZENS.

**H.B. 5657**, AN ACT CONCERNING THE RESTORATION OF FREIGHT RAIL SERVICE, WOULD REQUIRE THAT BOND AUTHORIZATIONS FOR D.O.T. AND D.E.D. BE USED TO REFURBISH TRACKS TO RESTORE AND INCREASE RAIL FREIGHT SERVICE. SHIPPERS UNDERSTANDABLY CHOOSE TRUCKS OVER RAIL WHEN TRUCKERS ARE ABLE TO OFFER LOWER RATES BECAUSE THEY TRAVEL ON A HEAVILY-SUBSIDIZED HIGHWAY SYSTEM AND FREIGHT TRAINS MUST USE INADEQUATE RAILS. WE WOULD HAVE LESS CONGESTED HIGHWAYS, BETTER AIR QUALITY, AND IMPROVED BUSINESS CONDITIONS.

**H.B. 6210**, AN ACT ESTABLISHING COMMUTER RAIL SERVICE BETWEEN NEW HAVEN, HARTFORD, AND SPRINGFIELD AND TO RESTRUCTURE THE D.O.T. THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN LANGUISHING SINCE ITS PROPOSAL AND DESERVES TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION. WE NEED A MASS TRANSIT ALTERNATIVE FOR COMMUTERS WHO NEED TO GO CONSIDERABLE DISTANCES FROM THEIR HOMES TO THEIR PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT. SUCH A SERVICE WOULD PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REDUCE EMISSIONS.

*Carol Leighton, Co-Chair CTL*