Testimony of Eric W. Gjede
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Before the Transportation Committee
Hartford, CT
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Testifying in support of HJR 8
Resolution Proposing An Amendment To The State Constitution Limiting The Use Of Moneys Contained In The Special Transportation Fund

Good morning Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera, Senator Boucher, Representative O'Dea, and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am assistant counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which represents more than 10,000 large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

I want to thank the committee for holding a public hearing on this important proposed resolution.

A safe, modernized transportation infrastructure is vital for the efficient flow of goods and services to and from Connecticut's businesses. Connecticut's transportation infrastructure is in need of costly repairs and the sources of funding for such repairs have become increasingly unreliable.

The business community is greatly concerned about the economic impact of congestion on our highways. There is no single solution that can address this issue on its own. Only a multi-modal plan that expands our highways and leverages our mass transit resources will solve this problem. However, highway improvements and transit resources are extremely costly. When funds are diverted away from the special transportation fund, we become even less able to address our state's transportation needs.

In a recent survey, Connecticut businesses overwhelmingly (74%) supported legislation that would prohibit the use of special transportation funds to cover general fund shortfalls. While leaner government and fiscal self-restraint should be the easiest solutions, a constitutional amendment to protect the special transportation fund may be what is necessary to protect the fund. Action now could help us avoid future shortfalls.

I urge the committee to support HJR 8.