



## State of Connecticut

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### **Testimony in Support of Senate Bill Number 155 Transportation Committee February 24, 2020**

Chairmen Leone and Lemar, Ranking Members Martin and Devlin and Members of the Transportation Committee, I would like to thank the Committee for raising **Senate Bill Number 155: An Act Concerning Rail Infrastructure Improvements**.

Railroad infrastructure has become more and more critical as we look for ways to reduce congestion on our highways and provide more reliable transportation to our constituents. The State of Connecticut has long recognized the importance of rail service with its multi-million dollar investments in the Danbury rail line, the New Canaan rail line, Shore Line East, and even new commuter service on the New Haven - Hartford-Springfield line. These investments have resulted not only in improved transportation for the communities along these rail lines, but have also prompted additional private investments in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Unfortunately, the Waterbury Rail Line hasn't been able to fully realize the benefit of this rail renaissance. During the same period of time that the other rail lines in this state have been improved, the Waterbury line has been neglected. Traffic continues to grow on Route 8 and traffic jams on the Commodore Hull Bridge have become worse and worse.

Largely due to new federal requirements, some funds have been invested to improve safety on the line, through the installation of Centralized Traffic Control signal systems and Positive Train Control. But that investment, while a good start, only highlights the critical need to capitalize on the full potential of that investment. The best way to do that is to acquire new, reliable, equipment, and add the additional, reliable service that the safety improvements make possible. Without this added investment, the Waterbury Rail Line will not only fail to realize its full potential, the initial investment in the line will be wasted.

Senate Bill 155 seeks to study the issue of rail infrastructure. But the time for study is over. Now is the time to take action. The request submitted to this committee by the Waterbury Rail Line Caucus outlines the path forward.

I urge the Transportation Committee to pass Senate Bill Number 155 with the additions suggested above so that the Waterbury Rail Line may become a reliable, safe, and attractive transportation resource for the Naugatuck River Valley. Please allow the full General Assembly the opportunity to debate this issue and to pass legislation to improve rail transportation infrastructure in our state.