



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



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**Public Hearing – March 8, 2021
Transportation Committee**

**Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Joseph Giulietti
Department of Transportation**

Proposed S.B. No. 982 AN ACT REVISING MOTOR VEHICLE STATUTES.

The Department of Transportation (CTDOT) respectfully offers the following comments in opposition to S.B. 982.

Section 14 would allow an unspecified number of commercial sized non-profit vehicles to access the Merritt Parkway. Currently, the Merritt Parkway prohibits commercial vehicles from using the roadway for many reasons. First and foremost, the Parkway was designed for the passenger vehicle. The roadway's steep grades and sharp curves are not well suited for large or heavy vehicles. The acceleration and deceleration lanes are often short and may not provide a larger vehicle enough time to adjust its travelling speed appropriately to enter or exit the highway. This lack of shoulder width can become problematic in an emergency where a large vehicle trying to pull-off the road may impact and queue traffic behind it as well as pose a risk of being hit by other vehicles. Larger vehicles also pose a threat to numerous low bridges on this stretch of road.

By allowing commercial sized non-profit vehicles to access the Parkway, CTDOT runs the risk of sending mixed messages to the general public that commercial vehicles are allowed on the Parkway. This would also create a challenge from an enforcement perspective and create a safety hazard for travelers on the Parkway.

The Department recognizes that this places hardship and inconvenience on those non-profits who are transporting seniors and individuals with disabilities within the Merritt and Wilbur Cross Parkways areas, however we are unable to support S.B. 982 as written.

During the 2019 legislative session, the Department offered to work with the committee to establish a pilot program to allow a certain number of non-profit vehicles to utilize the Merritt and the Wilbur Cross parkways while preserving the safety of the traveling public. We are happy to work with the committee to develop a pilot and draft language for consideration.

Also, Section 9 of the bill grants the right of way at an intersection to vehicles in a funeral procession. The Department is concerned this section could increase the potential for collisions. The Department does not recommend funeral processions have the right-of-way at locations where traffic control devices such as "STOP" signs or traffic signals have been installed. The motoring public is conditioned to obey these

devices and the presence of a funeral procession is not always immediately obvious to these motorists. For these safety reasons, the Department does not support this section of S.B. 982.

For further information or questions, please contact Anne Kleza (anne.kleza@ct.gov) or Pam Sucato (pamela.sucato@ct.gov) at the Department of Transportation, (860) 594-3013.