

March 6, 2019

Madam Chair/Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 7202, An Act Concerning the Sustainability of Connecticut's Transportation Infrastructure. My name is Darrell Harvey and I have been a resident of CT for 41 years. I am Co-CEO of The Ashforth Company, a commercial real estate company based in Stamford. We own office buildings in Stamford and in Greenwich at the Greenwich train station. I am a Board member of the Business Council of Fairfield County and am a former chair of the Board of the Stamford Hospital, the largest employer in Stamford.

As a landlord of office properties, as an employer, and as a board member of the Business Council, I am very aware of why companies and their employees choose to come to CT, and why they decide to stay or leave the state. I have been actively working with the Business Council on transportation issues for the last 40 years. While we have excellent human capital in the state it is increasingly difficult for employees to get to and from their jobs, whether commuting to or from NYC or within CT. Commuting patterns have changed dramatically over the last twenty-five years. Back then, everyone working in Stamford wanted to drive to work and did not care if their offices were near the train station. Now, with our major highways hopelessly congested, as an owner of office buildings not located close to the train, we have to pay significant amounts for daily private shuttle bus service to get our tenants' employees to and from the train station; a service that would never have been conceived of twenty-five years ago, but is now a necessity to lease our buildings. There are roughly 400 such shuttle trips to the Stamford train station every day, provided by landlords and other employers. Also, twenty-five years ago, Yale was not losing faculty to New York colleges because it took too long for the professors or their spouses to get to New York City by train (and the train was faster then).

The cause of this dire situation was predicted over twenty years ago by two people who taught me a lot about the issue of economic growth in CT. Joel Garreau wrote a book entitled Edge City in 1993 in which he identified five limits on the growth of Edge Cities and two of them were Mobility and Accessibility. We discussed how CT's failure to maintain its infrastructure needed to support Mobility and Accessibility would have a drastic effect on the rate of economic growth in our state. Building on this concept, Michael Gallis, an expert on large-scale regional development strategies, released his report on CT in 1999. In it he indicated that a "pattern of congestion" in the I-95 corridor "limits access and dynamics" in CT. He predicted that as this congestion increased, the area's connection to the global marketplace would diminish, and CT's economy would shrink. He further stated that "congestion effectively blocks economic activity from extending farther than Stamford." However, he indicated that "opening this corridor would allow economic activities to extend more into the

statewide network.” Finally, he predicted that if this issue of congestion was not addressed, CT was in danger of becoming a “giant (economic) cul de sac, or a dead end”. His answer was to invest in infrastructure and create a multi-modal future including highways, trains and buses. Unfortunately, CT has done the exact opposite by letting its transportation infrastructure deteriorate. And its economy compared to its neighbors and the rest of the country has been in effect an “economic cul de sac” since the Great Recession. Most visibly, I-95 now often resembles a parking lot and our trains run more slowly than they did in 1976.

But the bill that I am here to support today would have a major impact on both I-95 congestion and on the speed of our trains, thereby dramatically improving the spine of our transportation network and initiating a multi-modal future. The proposed tolls will create a revenue stream, 40% funded by out-of-staters, to maintain and improve I-95, reduce congestion through the use of congestion pricing, allow better bus service, and fund the improvements needed to implement the Governor’s 30-30-30 plan to speed up rail travel causing more travelers to use rail instead of the highways. 30-30-30 means thirty-minute travel times for Hartford/New Haven, New Haven/Stamford, and Stamford/Grand Central or Penn Station.

I have been working hard on 30-30-30 for the last eight years and with a portion of the revenues from tolls it can be successfully financed and implemented. Nine of our ten largest cities are located on our train lines. A revitalized rail system will connect our network of cities to each other and the global network, allowing our talented workforce to move easily within the state from city to city, to and from New York City, and at the same time reduce congestion on our highways.

I would like to finish by saying I am supporting House Bill 7202 with three major conditions:

1. The Department of Transportation will consider the option of a Public Private Partnership to implement and be accountable for the cost of constructing the tolls.
2. A portion of the revenue stream created by the tolls must go to support the funding of the Governor’s plan for 30-30-30.
3. The implementation of 30-30-30 will also be done through a Public Private Partnership in order to obtain the maximum benefit at the lowest possible price for CT taxpayers. The revenue stream from the tolls should result in an infrastructure project that is as successful as the Tappan Zee Bridge, done through a Public Private Partnership, rather than the financially disastrous Big Dig in Boston.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Darrell Harvey