

Ned Lamont
GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

May 9, 2019

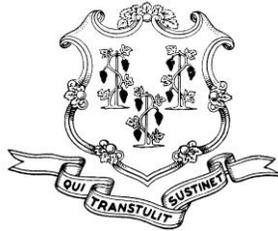
Dear Colleagues,

I've made it a habit to reach out to Democrats and Republicans, business, labor and local leaders as we work toward a solution that fundamentally invests in and enhances our transportation system for decades to come. The good news is – we all agree that our transportation infrastructure is severely hampering our state's ability to compete and succeed. Now, how to solve for it?

It's in that spirit that I write to you today. For the last two months, my administration has been working with the Transportation co-chairs to craft a bill that allows us to upgrade our roads and bridges and speed up rail. I have also talked with Republicans and Democrats about a potential compromise, all in the spirit of forging a bipartisan path ahead- a place in which I am very comfortable. I am more than willing to entertain a compromise that shores up our Special Transportation Fund, provides for some short-term borrowing until the point at which tolls come online and creates a reliable, sustainable revenue source that will fundamentally improve and enhance our transportation system for the future.

But I won't entertain a compromise in which the numbers don't add up, the excessive borrowing crowds out other needed and necessary investments elsewhere and the approach is simply a band-aid to buy more time until the point at which we can revisit this conversation in another two years- all while our roads and rail continue to decline and economy limps along. I won't kick the can down the road any longer.

Business leaders tell us our transportation system is severely hampering our ability to grow and compete. Labor leaders tell us they are ready, willing and able to get to work on these critical projects. And the ratings agencies are waiting to see our next move. We have a plan in which 40% of the revenue will be collected from people who don't even live here. Peak rates will be set at 4.4 cents per mile, plus/minus 30% (roughly 1.3 cents) to allow DOT the flexibility to ensure ultimate approval by federal DOT. These rates will be frozen for 3 years. Discounts will be provided to Connecticut EZ-Pass holders, with additional discounts for "frequent users"- commuters and caregivers or parents driving their kids to soccer practice, for example. I also know that we need to do something to help families who are getting squeezed, which is why our bill allows for a monthly credit loaded on an EZ-Pass, as well as ways to load cash on the passes at local convenience stores. I heard you when you said that you wanted more line-of-sight into the state's long-range transportation planning and development, which is why the bill creates a Connecticut Transportation Commission- a bipartisan group of legislators, commissioners and the treasurer,



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to review and approve DOT's plan. And let's harness the opportunity that short-term borrowing provides us, and invest \$100 million in rail and transit across the state.

What does this opportunity mean for Connecticut? New rail cars; expanded service on Metro-North branch lines and Shoreline East; a new Mixmaster; simplifying the Route 15/Route 7 interchange; easing congestion at the I-91/I-691/Route 15 interchange and on I-95, just to name a few. We'll also be able to provide \$1 bus service, open the highway welcome centers and tie revenues to an eventual decrease in the gas tax.

But larger than that, what you'll get is a Connecticut that has made the smart choice to finally address a 30-year patchwork solution to a gaping hole. You'll get a Connecticut that capitalizes on its strategic location between Boston and New York instead of shirking from it. You'll get a transportation system that supports economic development instead of hindering it. And you'll get an acknowledgment from the public that you made the courageous- but difficult - choice on behalf of our state and its future.

So many of you have told me privately that you know this is the right thing to do even though it will be a tough vote. But I didn't come to Hartford- and I know most of you didn't either- to make the easy choices and turn a blind eye to the gathering - or in some cases, raging- storm. If you have a better idea, I'm all ears, but now is the time to move forward without compromising our core principles for an easier vote.

We are in this together. We can get this state moving, and growing, together. Let's pass this bill, together.

Best,
Ned