



Senator Cohen, Representative Berger-Girvalo, Ranking Member Representative Hwang and Ranking Member Representative Kennedy and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee.

My name is Jim Gildea, and I am the Chairman of the Connecticut Public Transportation Council. I am offering written testimony IN SUPPORT OF:

SB 714, An Act Restoring Services on the Shore Line East Rail Line.

I offer testimony in support of **Senate Bill 714** because as Chair of the Connecticut Public Transportation Council, we understand how critical it is for both commuters, the environment and economic development to bring the service level up to where it had been pre Covid.

With regards to the Shore Line East service level, this is the only branch or line that has not been brought back to pre-Covid service levels. Although ridership will be cited as the reason, it's important to know all other lines were brought back to 100% without that same increase in ridership requirement.

Without question, the best way to increase ridership of a public transportation option is to provide constant, steady service. We do the exact opposite on the Shore Line East. One need only look at the Waterbury branch (of which I am a commuter) to see what providing service does for ridership. That branch was given 7 additional trains and a 44% increase in service. The results are clear, it was the first rail branch in the entire State of Connecticut that ended 2023 with an increase in pre Covid ridership and followed that up in 2024 by exceeding their 2022 ridership numbers by 18%.

In 2024, the Hartford Line became the 2nd line or branch that followed suit by also exceeding its pre Covid ridership. This increase in ridership is resulting in an investment of \$25 million, which will increase reliability across the line at all stations including Springfield, Mass ([Connecticut to receive \\$11.6 million to expand CTrail Hartford Line: Lamont](#)).

Both situations serve as excellent examples of steady service attracting ridership and I believe they are worthwhile investments.

During the session of 2024, an additional 5 million dollars was invested in the Shore Line East which resulted in 4 additional trains. One only needs to examine the impact of this investment to fully grasp how successful that it was. Here are the 4 months immediately preceding the additional Shore Line East Train Service:

- September – 32% increase over September 2023
- October – 58% increase over October 2023
- November – 74% increase over November 2023
- December – 53% increase over December r 2023

In closing, I would say that the numbers are clear, increased service will result in increased ridership. The Shore Line East was once a vibrant line, setting ridership records along the way. Somewhere along the line, it was neglected, and service was withheld. It's time to look at the numbers and invest in the Shore Line East, just as we have in every other rail line in the State of Connecticut.

Thank you

Jim Gildea
Chairman, Connecticut Public Transportation Council