



Luke A. Bronin
Mayor

January 31, 2020

Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, Senator Martin, Representative Devlin, and members of the Transportation committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of An Act Concerning the Sustainability of Connecticut's Transportation Infrastructure.

Investing in Connecticut's transportation infrastructure is essential to our state's economic future. Without significant transportation investment, Connecticut will never compete with the states that are beating us in the competition for economic prosperity and growth. Transportation investment is about many things: climate, equity, economic opportunity. But for those who regularly talk about Connecticut's business climate, make no mistake: businesses large and small have made clear that transportation is a business climate issue, too. And a big one.

We are less than one hundred miles from two of the most vibrant metro economies on the planet. Residents and businesses in New York and Boston are facing rising costs of living and congestion. With high quality of life and lower cost of living, we have a strategic opportunity to benefit from our proximity to those cities. But without a modern transportation system, we surrender that advantage.

Our bridges are at risk of falling down, our roads are congested, public transit provides less extensive service than it did a century ago, our trains are slower than they were sixty years ago, and our broader mobility strategy is stuck in the last century.

So, there should be no debate about the need to make significant transportation investment. The question is, what's the best way to fund that critical investment? Would we rather have Connecticut residents and businesses pay one hundred percent of the cost, or ask large, out of state trucks who use our roads to contribute their fair share?

The legislation before you today represents the bare minimum that we should be doing. I believe that most of you know that, to secure Connecticut's economic future, we should be doing more – making greater investment in commuter rail, in bus service, in pedestrian safety, and more. But we cannot afford to wait any longer. We cannot afford to miss this moment.

The most controversial part of this legislation is a financing system that is used in forty two states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.¹ Rejecting user fees is the same as looking Connecticut taxpayers in the eyes and saying, "We want you to pay full price, even though there is a fifty percent discount on the table." That's the bottom line. We have to make investments. If you vote against user fees, you are asking Connecticut taxpayers to turn down a discount and pay full price.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke A. Bronin", is written over a horizontal line.

Luke A. Bronin
Mayor

¹ National Conference of State Legislatures, "Toll Facilities in the United States," [February 1, 2013](#).