



Testimony of Roy A. Merritt, Jr, P.E.

On behalf of
**The Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers (CSCE) Section of the
American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)**

Before the Transportation Committee

Regarding the following:

Bill: *Senate Bill No. 713 – AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN REST AREAS*
CSCE Position: **Supports**

Bill: *House Bill No. 5162 – AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY
ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES FOR REST AREAS ON STATE HIGHWAYS*
CSCE Position: **Supports**

February 13, 2019

I am Roy Merritt, Jr., and I am a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Connecticut. I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers (CSCE) Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers¹ (ASCE), where I serve as Chairman of their Legislative Affairs Committee. CSCE submits this testimony in **support of** Senate Bill No. 713 – AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN REST AREAS and House Bill No. 5162 – AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES FOR REST AREAS ON STATE HIGHWAYS.

Due to budget pressures in recent years, state leaders have chosen to close rest areas along Connecticut’s highways, or open rest areas under a limited schedule. This is a disservice to traveling motorists in our state. Rest areas are more than a public convenience providing rest rooms and refreshments. They also offer provide a public safety benefit allowing tired and exhausted drivers an opportunity to rest and take a few moments to refresh themselves. Rest areas also provide an opportunity to promote our State, and support our local businesses and tourism industry.

Closed rest areas on Connecticut’s highways sends a poor message to our residents, visitors, and those traveling through our state. Closed rest areas are often one of the first observations encountered by drivers from out-of-state, and immediately draws attention to the failings of our state government. In a time where Connecticut is competing with our neighbors and other states for jobs, businesses, and residents, Connecticut should be taking every effort to market itself in a positive light. The simple measure of keeping our rest areas open 24/7 is a small

commitment that a functioning state government should be able to achieve. It is imperative that we find whatever funding sources are needed to open our rest areas around the clock and properly maintain them.

CSCE reiterates that we strongly **support** keeping the State's rest areas open 24 hour a day, seven days a week, and finding the necessary revenue to operate and maintain them in good order. We urge members of the Transportation Committee, and all members of the General Assembly to **support** S.B. No. 713 and H.B. No. 5162. We look forward to working with the Legislature on this important issue.

Thank you,



Roy A. Merritt, Jr., P.E.
Burlington, CT

Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers
Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers

Mr. Merritt serves as Chairman of CSCE's Legislative Affairs Committee

¹ ASCE was founded in 1852 and is the oldest national civil engineering organization. It represents more than 150,000 civil engineers (over 1,600 in Connecticut) in private practice, government, industry and academia who are dedicated to the advancement of the science and the profession of civil engineering. ASCE is a non-profit educational and professional society organized under Part 1.501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. CSCE is a 100% volunteer organization.