



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

On behalf of the

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

Before the Transportation Committee

Regarding

- ***Governor's House Joint Resolution No. 1 – RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO PROTECT THE RESOURCES OF THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND***

February 29, 2016

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 H.J. Resolution No. 1 and the Governor's efforts to establish a Constitutional Amendment creating a "lock-box" to protect monies in the Special Transportation Fund.** By creating a "lock-box" on the Special Transportation Fund, the citizens of Connecticut will have the assurance that revenue collected through transportation-related fees, such as the fuel (gasoline and diesel) tax and vehicle registration fees, will be used for its intended purpose of maintaining and improving our transportation infrastructure. For far too long our elected leaders have allowed the Special Transportation Fund to be "raided" by other interests, transferred to the General Fund, and used on a myriad of items not related to transportation. Whether justified or not, past siphoning of transportation funds for non-transportation purposes has compromised the quality of our transportation infrastructure and threatens the future viability of our State's economy and quality of life. We ask that our elected leaders take action to end this practice by supporting H.J. No. 1.

Governor Malloy has a bold, but necessary vision for making Connecticut's transportation systems "best-in-class". His 30 year, \$100 billion *Let's Go CT!* plan would help reverse decades of underinvestment in our transportation systems that has allowed our aging system to deteriorate, become increasingly congested, less functional, and more costly to maintain. Currently, 41% of state and local roads are in poor condition and 35% of Connecticut's bridges are functionally obsolete or structurally deficient². These conditions cost us time and money, and reduce safety. Increased congestion and poor conditions on our roadways slows and delays commuters, truckers and delivery of goods, and holds back the State's economy. The Connecticut Business and Industry Association found that 42% of businesses think the state's

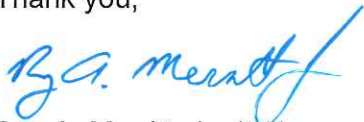
road congestion hinders their opportunities for growth, which impacts jobs and makes our state less competitive.

Recent projects in Connecticut show the benefit of investing in our transportation systems. For example, the Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge (“Q-Bridge”) in New Haven was recently completed and opened this past summer ahead of schedule and on-budget; replacing an aging, structurally deficient, and functionally obsolete bridge with a striking signature span that has reduced congestion. New rail cars and other improvements on the busy New Haven Commuter Rail Line has resulted in increased ridership, improved reliability, and helped slow the growth of traffic on I-95. These upgrades remind us of what is possible when the State invests in its transportation systems.

By adopting H.J. Resolution No. 1 and creating a “lock-box” on the Special Transportation Fund, our lawmakers can ensure that future funding is available and dedicated to modernizing our transportation systems. Being a fiscally-responsible state includes investing in our transportation network. It has not received adequate investment in the past, which if allowed to continue, will increase the risk of our infrastructure falling into a state of disrepair, impacting public safety and resulting in more emergency repairs and costly retrofits. Protecting our transportation revenue with a “lock-box” and making the necessary investments in the state’s infrastructure will benefit our economy, increase our competitiveness, and improve our quality of life in the coming decades.

The Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers looks forward to working with the Connecticut Legislature on this most important issue.

Thank you,



Roy A. Merritt, Jr., P.E.
Chairman, Legislative Affairs Committee
**Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers Section
of the American Society of Civil Engineers**

¹ ASCE was founded in 1852 and is the oldest national civil engineering organization. It represents over 145,000 civil engineers (1,650 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.

² Statistics on road and bridge conditions referenced from Transportation Finance Panel Final Report dated January 15, 2016; presented to Governor Dannel P. Malloy, State of Connecticut.