

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY
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Bob Hammersley
Office of Policy and Management
450 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106.

October 8, 2010

Dear Mr. Hammersley:

On September 8, 2010, we received a letter from Mr. Bruce Alexander, Chairman of the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB), inviting each Regional Planning Organization to provide recommendations to the you regarding “(1) any changes in, or additions to, the 2007 strategy and recommendations which ... are needed; and (2) a list of projects which ... are needed.”

In response to that invitation our staff and Board members have reviewed the 2007 Strategy and have the following recommendation in relation to the issue of I-95 Corridor Congestion.

The I-95 Corridor, including both the rail and highway components, is one of the most, if not *the* most, congested transportation corridor in the Northeast - and possibly in the entire nation. Impacts from that congestion reverberate throughout the State in terms of employee loss-time, equipment damage and losses, attractiveness of the State to new business, environmental pollution, and personal physical and emotional stress. Those problems, which are acknowledged in the 2007 Strategy, have only increased with the passage of time, and may even be exacerbated as some of the Strategy’s policies are implemented. For example, while the Bridgeport feeder barge facility may shift some freight traffic from the Corridor between New York/New Jersey and Bridgeport, once that barge freight reaches Bridgeport, it will virtually have no place to go other than back into the I-95 Corridor, adding to the existing rising tide of congestion.

There is an alternative that could help mitigate that negative impact and, in fact, make it a positive asset to the State - that is, improvement of the inland rail connection between Bridgeport and Hartford. That rail connection could enable the substantial amounts of freight and passenger traffic, which is ultimately headed northward, to proceed directly away from the I-95 corridor out of Bridgeport and to Waterbury, thru New Britain, and on to Hartford. There exist rail lines linking those areas at the current time; their utilization, however, is hindered by their state of dis-repair which imposes speed limits on them in certain locations below 15-20 miles per hour.

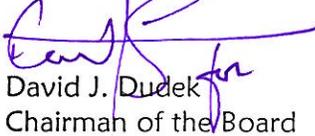
This rail link could also provide a significant opportunity for the relocation of some of the freight and passenger traffic that currently congests both the I-95 and I-91 transportation corridors in a

manner that could greatly enhance statewide access to the inland manpower resources of the Waterbury, Bristol and New Britain areas.

In support of the improvement of this Bridgeport to Hartford rail link, the CCRPA has been actively seeking funds to complete required scoping and other studies precedent to precisely identifying, designing, and constructing the needed rail line improvements. The CCRPA needs State support for these efforts and for that reason is recommending, that the Transportation Strategy Board include in its 2010 Strategy Update a \$1 million project to complete an alternatives analysis and NEPA scoping study for the Waterbury to Berlin corridor.

We thank the TSB for this invitation to participate in its 2010 Strategy Update, and offer our assistance to help the Board understand the tremendous positive statewide impact the project that we are recommending would provide.

Yours very truly,



David J. Dudek
Chairman of the Board

cc: CARPO
I-84 TIA Board members