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Committee on Transportation
Public Hearing – January 31, 2020

LCO No. 373: AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CONNECTICUT'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

In support

Dear Senator Leone, Representative Lemar, Senator Devlin, Representative Martin and Members of the Committee,

The Connecticut Construction Industries Association, Inc. supports this proposal for the reason that the current funding streams supporting the Special Transportation Fund are not able to sustain current systems and services into the future. This proposal would provide a dependable, long-term, user-based, dedicated funding stream, where the users of the systems are paying for the systems.

Connecticut needs a dependable, user-based funding stream. Decades of limited funding have forced the state to make investments in some areas of transportation at the expense of others, leading the systems down a path of slow deterioration on a whole.

It is well-documented that Connecticut's transportation systems are inadequate, congested and deteriorating. Reports on Connecticut's transportation systems indicate that the state's transportation systems are failing and require billions of dollars in repairs and enhancements. For example:

- A 2017 report by the American Road and Builders Association held that 57 percent of Connecticut roads eligible for federal aid are rated "not acceptable", which is the second highest percentage in all 50 states; 33.5 percent of Connecticut's bridges are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, which is well above the national average of 23 percent; and ConnDOT estimates that repairing or replacing four key rail bridges, of the 257 rail bridges in the state, will cost over \$3 billion.
- A 2017 report by TRIP, a national transportation research group, held that driving on deficient roads cost Connecticut motorists a total of \$6.1 billion annually in the form of additional vehicle operating costs, congestion related delays and traffic crashes. TRIP also held that this deteriorating infrastructure has a detrimental impact on the overall quality of life in the state. Residents spend over 45 hours per year stuck in traffic, valuable time that they could be spending with family and friends. Moreover, as a corridor state, our local economy is reliant on a strong transportation system.
- A 2019 analysis prepared by the Connecticut Department of Transportation, which compares the current funding streams to the needs identified in the Department's Transportation Asset Management Plan, identifies a shortfall of \$400 million per year to merely maintain the current systems in a state of good repair.

It is clear, that under the current levels of funding, Connecticut's transportation systems and services continue to decline. Existing revenue streams and financing mechanisms supporting the state's transportation programs cannot keep pace with the State's mounting transportation needs over the long-term. Additionally, the state cannot embark on the capacity improvements and service



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upgrades that will drive economic growth. The funding generated under this proposal would help fill a growing gap between current revenue streams and much needed transportation investments.

The additional net new revenue generated by this proposal would provide funding for projects that would otherwise compete for funding with existing federal and state public transportation and highway programs. It would enhance the current funding sources by providing new funding for projects, which would leave more of the traditional funding available in the core transportation programs.

In Connecticut, there are several mega-projects in the preliminary engineering process. Any one of those projects, by itself, could exhaust the state's current transportation revenue streams. If several of those projects are funded under this proposal, more resources would be available through the core programs and the state would be in a better position to meet its service, maintenance and expansion needs. Likewise, there are many other projects that ConnDOT has not begun to address due to a lack of funding. This proposal may give the state the ability to fund one or more of those projects, which may not otherwise be delivered in the future.

Connecticut needs to develop new revenue streams and financing mechanisms, such as this, to meet its transportation needs into the future. This proposal could be a valuable part of a comprehensive long-term plan to sustain the transportation systems Connecticut needs.

It is time to stop deferring difficult funding decisions for transportation in Connecticut. The current funding sources are not supporting the state's existing transportation systems and programs. Connecticut needs an adequate, long-term, dependable, user-based funding stream for transportation now.

For questions or additional information, contact Don Shubert at 860-529-6855 or dshubert@ctconstruction.org. Thank you for this opportunity to testify today. This discussion is important to putting Connecticut's public transportation and highway programs on a solid foundation of fiscal stability.

Respectfully submitted:

Donald J. Shubert

The Connecticut Construction Industries Association, Inc represents various sectors of the commercial construction industry in the state. Formed over 40 years ago, CCIA is an organization of associations, where various segments of the commercial construction industry work together to advance and promote their shared interests. CCIA members include contractors, subcontractors, material producers, suppliers, and affiliated organizations.