



CONNECTICUT EMPLOYEES UNION INDEPENDENT

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Testimony by Carl Chisem, President

Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511

LCO 373 *An Act Concerning the Sustainability of Connecticut's Transportation and Infrastructure*
Transportation Committee Public Hearing – January 31, 2020

Chairman Leone, Chairman Lemar and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Carl Chisem and I am President of the Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511. We represent over 6,000 active and retired blue collar maintenance and service State workers. Our members provide valuable services within our state facilities. They cook, clean, repair, maintain and deliver in Connecticut's State buildings, hospitals, college campuses, airports, roads, bridges and parks. They represent the true diversity of our great State.

I submit this testimony in support of LCO 373 *An Act Concerning the Sustainability of Connecticut's Transportation and Infrastructure* and in solidarity with our union brothers and sisters in the Building Trades. Passage of this legislation will not only help to create more than 23,000 good paying jobs per year for ten years but will also provide funding for the much-needed improvement of our state's infrastructure. Investing in Connecticut's economy, its roads, bridges, public transportation and its citizens will positively impact the state's fiscal stability and quality of life for all its residents.

Connecticut is the only state on the eastern seaboard that does not have some form of tolling. As a result, our roads are crumbling, our bridges are unsafe, and businesses are citing the deteriorating infrastructure as a liability. Trucks-only tolls is the best option for generating a steady, reliable stream of revenue into the Special Transportation Fund. A \$19 billion investment will result in approximately \$40 billion of economic activity in Connecticut. It is an investment we must make. Our state's construction and engineering sector will flourish, employers will have a more reliable workforce and people will spend less time in their daily commutes leaving more time for family.

Another point must be made. For years, the Department of Transportation has produced cost-effectiveness evaluations that consistently confirm that engineering, inspection and other work can be done better, faster and for far less by state employees. Unfortunately, officials continue to waste millions on expensive outside engineering and inspection consultants. The data from these cost evaluations indicate savings of 61.61% for Construction Inspection work and a savings of 58.46% for Engineering Services had in-house personnel performed these jobs. Let's stop the outsourcing and allow our dedicated and talented state employees perform the work. Not only will they help to save the State of Connecticut money, but they will serve as partners in ensuring a safe workplace, a safe commute for our residents and an improved transportation infrastructure system that will benefit all.

Trucks-only tolls is a win-win for the State of Connecticut. I urge a favorable vote for LCO 373.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carl Chisem
President