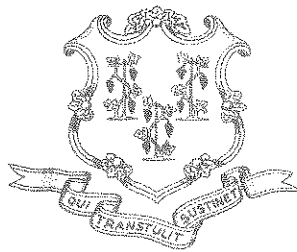


SENATOR DONALD J. DEFRONZO

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State of Connecticut

SENATE
Sixth District

Chief Assistant Majority Leader

Chair
Transportation

Member
Environment
Finance, Revenue & Bonding

July 15, 2010

The Honorable M. Jodi Rell
310 Capitol Ave.
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Rell:

Thank you for your letter of July 14 indicating skepticism about my lack of knowledge concerning pending bond requests in the amount of \$200 million for the New Haven-to-Springfield Rail project. I agree that it has been clear for some time that a financial commitment from the state would be needed to help secure federal funding for this project. What has not been clear is the actual level of state funding to be requested and the timeframe for the commitment of such funds.

You reference the meeting in your office with Secretary LaHood, and I do remember that meeting quite clearly. While indicating a deep interest in the project, Secretary LaHood neither committed to funding it nor specified an amount of potential federal assistance in the event funding was forthcoming. Similarly, while we all recognized the need for state bond allocations to demonstrate the state's serious interest in the project, no dollar amount was discussed and no timeframe for the commitment of such funds was established.

As late as the last week in June, I was informed by Senate leadership that no communication had been received from your office concerning a bond allocation proposal for this project in July. In response to a subsequent inquiry to the Department of Transportation on this subject, staff there said they were not authorized to discuss this matter with the chairs of the Transportation Committee at that time. Why this information could not be shared with the Transportation Committee is a mystery to me.

We have all worked hard to advance the New Haven-to-Springfield plan, and no one wants to delay potential federal support for such a strategically important project. Nonetheless, we all should be cognizant of the impact a \$200 million allocation of limited state bond funds will have on other important state transportation initiatives. Given the fact that the Special Transportation Fund is already financially oversubscribed, the citizens of Connecticut as well as legislators need

to understand that yet-unspecified transportation projects may be delayed or even cancelled as a result of this decision.

For many good reasons we agree on the need to move forward with the New Haven-to-Springfield project, but the cost of this commitment in terms of bonded debt and negative impact on other pending transportation plans cannot be ignored. I only ask that this reality be acknowledged and that the Transportation Committee and members of the General Assembly be given the opportunity to fully comprehend the serious consequences such a decision will likely have on the balance on the state's transportation plan. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter more fully and, if necessary, document my concern about the sufficiency of the Special Transportation Fund to your staff. I do appreciate your leadership on the New Haven-to-Springfield initiative, but I believe it cannot be considered in isolation from all other transportation plans.

Sincerely,



Donald J. DeFronzo
Senate Chair, Transportation Committee

cc. Sen. Williams – Senate President Pro Tempore
Rep. Donovan – Speaker of the House
Rep. Guerrero – House Transportation Chair
Jeff Parker – Acting Commissioner - DOT
Rep. Scribner – House Transportation Ranking Member
Sen. Boucher – Senate Transportation Ranking Member