



WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF MAYOR DAVID R. MARTIN
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

HEARING ON
“SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION: LOCAL PERSPECTIVES ON
MOVING AMERICA”

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SURFACE TRANSPORTATION, AND MERCHANT MARINE
INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY, AND SECURITY

MAY 15, 2014

Chairman Blumenthal, Ranking Member Blunt, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today to speak about such an important issue.

My name is David Martin, Mayor of Stamford, Connecticut. Stamford is the third-largest city in Connecticut, with over 125,000 residents, and located approximately 30 miles outside of Manhattan. The city is home to one of the most diverse and vibrant communities in the country.

I am honored and proud to testify on behalf of Stamford residents and the broader population of people in Connecticut and Northeast who depend on rail.

Today, I plan to discuss two areas: the importance of rail to the economic vitality of the region and the critical need for federal investment in our rail infrastructure.

Importance of Rail to our Economic Success

Each day, over 125,000 passengers ride on the New Haven Line of Metro North Railroad, which is a 60-mile stretch of track between New York City and New Haven, Connecticut that carries both commuters and long-distance travelers throughout the Northeast. In 2012, a total of 39 million passengers utilized the New Haven Line, an all-time high. It is the busiest rail line in the United States.

The New Haven Line plays a vital role in supporting the nearly \$3 trillion economy of the Northeast United States and is a critical portion of the rail network that extends from Washington, D.C. to Boston.



When rail service is effective, it provides economic benefits such as better accessibility to markets, employment, and increased investment. Businesses desire and depend on rail. In Stamford, for example, the commercial vacancy rate in buildings near the train station is about half that of the overall commercial vacancy rate in the city.

Stamford is home to four Fortune 500 Companies and is the largest financial district in the New York Metro Area outside of New York City. We are unique in that we not only have local residents depending on rail to commute to New York City, but have employees depending on rail to commute to Stamford.

In meeting with executives from these companies, they are universally concerned about the reliability and future of rail service.

Unreliable service, frequent breakdowns, and other complications threaten their future growth and it affects Stamford's ability to both attract and retain new businesses. It also affects the quality of life for residents, especially considering the fact that rail is the primary alternative to traveling on our roadways, which are among the most congested in the country.

Projections show that the populations of Connecticut and New York City will continue to grow and that ridership on the New Haven Line will increase from 39 million passengers to 57 million by 2030 – a nearly 50% increase.

We need to be able to support this growth.

The federal government can have an immediate impact and safeguard the long-term vitality of the Northeast by investing in our rail infrastructure. The scope of the investment necessary is more than any one city or state can provide.

Need for Federal Investment

Despite the overwhelming – and growing – demand for rail service, the government has not made the investments required in order to maintain the infrastructure.

The line was built in the 1840's – before the Civil War – and believe it or not, some of that original rail infrastructure is still in use today. And it is beginning to fail.

In the past two years, the New Haven Line has suffered from significant disruption:

- May 2013: Train derailment and collision in Bridgeport that injured 76 people.



- September 2013: Broken electrical feeder cable, past its design life, caused a power outage that hampered service for two weeks.
- January 2014: Riders stranded on trains and at Grand Central Station for over two hours as a result of signaling glitches.
- May 2014: Just this week, a fire at a Cos Cob switching control house caused multiple days of delays.

In addition, the line has been laden with frequent delays caused by malfunctioning bridges, signaling errors, and any number of other problems. It has been on the front page of the local newspaper every day this week.

Severe weather in recent years has only expedited the line's deterioration.

Funds are urgently needed to help revitalize the line and make repairs as soon as possible.

- There are 134 bridges on the main line, including nine moveable bridges (over water), and over half of these bridges are rated in fair or poor condition.
- Five of the movable bridges – required for boats to gain access to Long Island Sound – are in dire condition. The youngest bridge was built in 1907.
- Repairs to the signal & communications system, platforms, tracks, and rail yards are also necessary.

The State of Connecticut, under the leadership of Governor Malloy, has committed to investing nearly \$1 billion over the next five years, despite significant budgetary constraints. Even with this level of investment, it is estimated that an additional \$3.6 billion is needed through 2020 to rebuild the rail infrastructure.

That level of funding does not even begin to address discussions about high speed rail or a major expansion in line capacity; it is needed to simply catch up on deferred maintenance and allow the track to run as it was intended when first built in 1840's.

The most successful countries in history have been defined by their ability to build, maintain, and grow their transportation networks.

The United States is no different. Our success and prosperity as a nation has been made possible in large part because of our commitment to our transportation networks. Examples include the Erie Canal, transcontinental railroad, and our Interstate Highway System.

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I am here to request funding that can be used to help make repairs to our passenger rail line and put us on track towards safe, fast, and reliable service. I understand that these challenges will not be solved overnight, but I am asking for your partnership to help prevent catastrophe and safeguard the economic vitality of the region.

I thank you again for your time and attention this afternoon.