



May 26, 2016

Commissioner James P. Redeker
Connecticut Department of Transportation
2800 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT 06111

RE: I-84 Hartford Project

Dear Commissioner Redeker:

The CT River Valley Chamber of Commerce supports the I-84/I-91 proposal put forth by Congressman John B. Larson. Further, we request that the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) conduct an expedited study of this tunnel alternative either in conjunction with the ongoing I-84 Hartford Project to replace the Aetna Viaduct or as a part of the I-84/I-91 Interchange Study. Congressman Larson's plan would replace the viaduct with an underground bypass and interchange system, reclaim the Hartford and East Hartford Riverfronts, and create new levels on the land-side of the flood control system which would fortify the levees on the Hartford side of the river.

The members of our chamber have businesses primarily based in Glastonbury and East Hartford and live in the immediate area. The traffic on I-84/I-91 and the bridges impact their daily business and commute of their co-workers and employees.

Replacing the I-84 viaduct presents a rare and historic opportunity to address the long-term infrastructure needs of the capital city and transform the region for generations to come. If we plan and invest wisely, we have the potential to correct the monumental design errors of the past and create a robust transportation system for the next century. It is crucial that we fully consider the long-term viability of Hartford and the surrounding communities before choosing one alternative over another.

On May 9, Congressman Larson presented his 100-year plan to our organization, and although it is ambitious, our members appreciate his long-term vision and all-encompassing solution addressing our infrastructure in the capitol city. In addition to creating a vibrant, livable community, Congressman Larson's plan would also solve several major infrastructure challenges along this heavily travelled corridor.

A plan to allow I-84 to stay open during the construction phase; strengthen the levee system—an urgent threat to public safety; and, create a much needed bypass system for the significant amount of vehicles that pass through Hartford, freeing up our roads for local traffic seems to be the most viable proposal.

Chamber representatives met with the Project Team with Fitzgerald & Halliday seeking feedback on the I-84 Hartford Project and I-84/I-91 Interchange Study on May 19. Although a portion of the Congressman's plan is being studied, we would request his entire proposal be reviewed as your current study does not address the issue of the deteriorating levee system.

We applaud CTDOT for the hard work that has been put into developing the I-84 Hartford Project. Your department clearly understands the challenges associated with this project and the enormous opportunity that it presents to transform the region and move us in a positive direction. Because the decisions we make now in regards to infrastructure will determine the shape of our region for generations to come, it is crucial that we get this right and avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. The tunnel solution outlined by Congressman Larson to replace the viaduct warrants careful consideration and we urge you to expedite a study to fully evaluate this alternative.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Dombrowski
President

cc: The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
U.S. Senator
90 State House Square 10th Floor
Hartford, CT, 06103

The Honorable Chris Murphy
U.S. Senator
Colt Gateway
120 Huyslope Avenue
Suite 401
Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable John B. Larson
U.S. House of Representative
221 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Hartford, CT 06106

Amy D. Jackson-Grove
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
628-2 Hebron Avenue, Suite 303
Glastonbury, CT 06033