SAINT FRANCIS
Hospital and Medical Center

114 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT 06105

December 9, 2016

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

RE: I-84 Hartford Project

Dear Commissioner Redeker:

Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center enthusiastically and fully 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 Dike System which would fortify the levee system on the Hartford side of the river.

Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center has over 5,000 employees working in Hartford, they live throughout the Hartford Metro Region and depend upon both the I-84 and I-91 transportation corridors to get to work. In addition, we provide both in-patient and outpatient care to over 180,000 patients each year. A safe and modern transportation system is essential to support our regional ministry.

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 November 3, 2016, Congressman Larson presented his 100-year plan to our organization. His plan would reroute I-84 underground from the area of Flatbush Avenue in West Hartford to the Charter Oak Bridge, extending underneath the Connecticut River to the vicinity of Roberts Street in East Hartford. It would also bury I-91 along the Connecticut River north of Riverside Park to the South Meadows, freeing up acres of land for development and recreation in Hartford and East Hartford, and repurpose sections of I-84 and I-91 into modern boulevards.

In addition to creating a vibrant, livable community, Congressman Larson's plan would also solve several major infrastructure challenges along this heavily travelled corridor. In particular, it would 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.

Congressman Larson's proposal addresses a long-term problem that Hartford has faced over the years and now brings the City of Hartford back together again.

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 time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

John F. Rodis, M.D., M.B.A.
President
Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center

cc: The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
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The Honorable John B. Larson
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