

March 4, 2022

Esteemed Chairs Haskell and Lemar,  
Members of the Transportation Committee:

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the following bills:

- Senate Bill 390, *An Act Concerning Revisions to the Transportation Statutes*. Section 5 of this bill would build on the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) and give clear statutory authority for the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) to delegate additional responsibility, on a voluntary and mutually acceptable basis, for transportation improvements to the state's regional councils of governments (COGs).

With the unprecedented expansion of federal transportation funding that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) represents, states will be able to expand and accelerate their transportation project pipelines – provided they have the capacity to do so. Given the wave of retirements sweeping the public sector and shortages of new talent, sharing of the workload will be needed if states are to deliver on the promise of IIJA.

SB 390 will provide CTDOT the option to delegate responsibilities that can be efficiently managed at a regional level to the COGs, reducing the burden on Department resources and freeing them to focus on programs and projects of statewide significance and priority. In doing so, the bill represents a common-sense extension and logical evolution of the LOTICIP model that has been in successful operation since 2013 and that your Committee originally introduced.

**Partnership in program and project management will be integral to the success of IIJA in Connecticut, and WestCOG strongly urges you to advance this bill.**

- House Bill 5422, *An Act Concerning Motor Vehicle Noise*. WestCOG does not have a position on this bill but does consider noise pollution in its planning process, with the newest action an incipient [Noise Pollution Abatement Feasibility Study](#) for the New Canaan Branch Line. Given the subject of the bill, the following information may be of interest:
  1. [Noise is associated with poor health outcomes](#). Transportation is a major contributor to ambient noise, and transportation noise tends to be highest in low-income and minority communities, making it not just a matter of public health but one of environment justice. (However, federal transportation law is largely silent on noise.)
  2. While increases in noise pollution resulting from a [new transportation project may be evaluated and mitigated through the environmental process](#), there is no policy or funding source to address noise created by existing transportation infrastructure. Furthermore, noise levels on existing facilities are not static and may grow with increases in traffic.

3. With new understandings about the relationship between noise and health, it may be time to revisit policy. Congress could either revive the Noise Control Act, [which was defunded under the Reagan EPA](#), or Congress or one or more states could, minimally, establish a pilot program to fund projects to demonstrate and catalyze the use of noise pollution abatement technology ([much of it has been used for years overseas](#)) in existing transportation infrastructure.

Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis R. Pickering". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Francis R. Pickering  
Executive Director