



Testimony of Jennifer Buchanon, P.E.

On behalf of
**The Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers (CSCE) Section of the
American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)**

Before the Transportation Committee

Regarding the following:

Bill: *House Bill No. 7280 (Raised) – AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPORT FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE CREATION OF THE CONNECTICUT TRANSPORTATION FINANCE AUTHORITY*

CSCE Position: **Supports**

Bill: *House Bill No. 7202 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CONNECTICUT’S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE*

CSCE Position: **Supports**

March 6, 2019

I would like to thank Chairman Leone, Chairman Lemar, Ranking Members Martin and Devlin, and the entire Committee for allowing me to testify before you today. My name is Jennifer Buchanon, and I am a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Connecticut. I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers (CSCE) Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers¹ (ASCE), where I serve as member of their Legislative Affairs Committee. CSCE submits this testimony in **support of** [House Bill No. 7280 \(Raised\) – AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPORT FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE CREATION OF THE CONNECTICUT TRANSPORTATION FINANCE AUTHORITY](#) and [House Bill No. 7202 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CONNECTICUT’S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE](#).

CSCE is in full support of implementing electronic tolling systems on Connecticut’s highways in order to create a sustainable revenue stream dedicated to the Special Transportation Fund (STF) and provide appropriate funding to maintain and improve our state’s transportation infrastructure. Last October, CSCE released the [2018 Report Card for Connecticut’s Infrastructure](#). The grades given to Connecticut’s roads (D+) and bridges (C-) are consistent with a system that is on the verge of failure. According to the Report Card, the combination of poorly maintained roads and congestion cost Connecticut motorists approximately \$2.4 billion a year. In addition, almost 60% of the state’s bridges are over 50 years old and 70% are in fair or poor condition. As a state, the current condition of our roads and bridges is a direct result of the

inadequate investments Connecticut has made in our transportation infrastructure over the past several decades.

The current funding mechanisms for the STF - primarily the gas tax and the gross receipts tax on petroleum products, have not adequately kept pace with the revenue requirements facing our deteriorating and congested transportation systems. In 1997, the state gas tax was cut by 14 cents, and has remained at 25 cents a gallon since. Had the gas tax remained at its original level of 39 cents, or simply have been indexed to inflation, almost \$4 billion of additional revenue would have gone into the STF over the past 20 years – funds that could have financed many improvements in Connecticut’s transportation systems and left the STF in a much better position today. Declines in gas prices over the past few years have also led to declines in the gross receipts tax. Future reliance on gas taxes is problematic due to improving gas mileage, low gas prices, and a rapidly growing market for electric vehicles. Declining revenues will continue into the future as less gas is consumed. It is critical that Connecticut shift to a more sustainable revenue stream for transportation and shift away from a reliance on gasoline-based taxes. Electronic tolling on Connecticut’s highways fully meets these objectives and should be pursued.

Connecticut is at a crossroads. One path is to make permanent, severe cuts in transportation capital programs, dramatically reduce or eliminate services and maintenance programs, and allow our transportation systems to further deteriorate and become more congested. A better path, which CSCE supports, is to develop new revenue streams for the STF such as electronic tolling in order to fully fund the critical projects, services, and maintenance programs necessary to make our transportation systems “First-in-Class”. A first-class transportation network will benefit Connecticut’s economy, improve our quality of life, and make the state more attractive to businesses and employers.

CSCE reiterates that we strongly **support** developing sustainable revenue streams (such as electronic tolling) to fund needed maintenance and improvements to Connecticut’s transportation infrastructure. As such, CSCE **supports** establishing electronic tolling on specific highways in Connecticut as proposed in **H.B. No. 7280** and **H.B. No. 7202**, and urge all members of the Legislature to support the bill. We look forward to working with the Legislature on the important issues of finding a sustainable revenue source for the STF and improving Connecticut’s transportation systems.

Thank you,



Jennifer Buchanon, P.E.
Hamden, CT

Connecticut Society of Civil Engineers
Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers

Ms. Buchanon serves as a member of CSCE’s Legislative Affairs Committee

¹ ASCE was founded in 1852 and is the oldest national civil engineering organization. It represents more than 150,000 civil engineers (over 1,600 in Connecticut) in private practice, government, industry and academia who are dedicated to the advancement of the science and the profession of civil engineering. ASCE is a non-profit educational and professional society organized under Part 1.501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. CSCE is a 100% volunteer organization.