

# The Connecticut General Assembly



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Contact: Aysha Mahmood  
860-240-8742

## SHORELINE LEADERS CALL ON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO RESCIND PROPOSED SHORE LINE EAST CUTS

GUILFORD— On Wednesday, a bi-partisan group of shoreline state legislators and First Selectman held a press conference to oppose proposed cuts by the Department of Transportation to the popular Shore Line East commuter rail line.

The group, organized by **State Rep. Sean Scanlon** (D-Guilford), came together after the Department of Transportation announced they would be eliminating weekend and off-peak train service starting on July 1.

"For over twenty-five years Shore Line East has been a tremendous asset to our constituents and communities," said **Scanlon**. "People in 2018 want reliable public transportation options besides sitting in traffic on I-95 and almost every town on the route is currently working on economic development surrounding transit oriented development. To scale back service now is a huge mistake and I'm proud to stand with my colleagues from both parties to strongly urge the Commissioner to rethink these cuts."

"The cuts proposed to DOT will weaken the shoreline's transportation infrastructure and damage our state and local economy," said **Senator Ted Kennedy, Jr.** (D-Branford, Durham, Guilford, Killingly, Madison, North Branford). "Nearly 2,000 people commute on Shore Line East during the weekend and off-peak hours. These cuts will harm residents of the shoreline commuting to their jobs or visitors coming to our communities to work or patronize our businesses. This does not solve a problem; it creates a new problem and moves our state in the wrong direction. I urge DOT to reconsider these proposed cuts."

"A vibrant Shore Line East, complete with weekend service, is crucial to our economic growth and development. In addition to serving our workforce, including health care workers who frequently have weekend schedules, Shore Line East is essential to competing for the high tech, bio tech and manufacturing professionals being sought after by shoreline businesses," said **Rep. Lonnie Reed** (D-Branford). "They demand the kind of mass transit service that can get them where they want to go when they want to go there. Let's stop killing the things that work."

“People depend on reliable transportation options and these cuts hinder that. We need a much more innovative way to manage our economic crisis – and this isn’t it,” said **Rep. Vincent Candelora** (R-Durham, Guilford, North Branford and Wallingford).

“For almost three decades Shore Line East has played a significant role in reducing congestion on our highways, with almost 2,000 people a week using it. Much of its success can be attributed to shoreline towns working with the Department of Transportation in urging residents to take advantage of rail services and stay off the highways. As Connecticut looks to create more opportunities to create public transit, these proposed cuts are going in the wrong direction,” said **Rep. Noreen Kokoruda** (R-Durham, Madison).

“The proposed reduction to Shoreline East services is distressing on several levels,” said **Guilford First Selectman Matt Hoey**. “Many Guilford residents have embraced the service and depend on its continued viability as commuters to jobs and cultural centers in New Haven and beyond, thereby reducing congestion on an already overburdened highway. The state has made significant investments in the Shore Line East infrastructure that should not be abandoned and I urge the administration and the legislature to refrain from making any cuts.”

“Many years ago, the Chambers of Commerce along the shoreline lobbied hard to convince CT DOT to invest in expanding the rail service provided by Shore Line East,” said **Madison First Selectman Tom Banisch**. “Having been involved with that effort and seeing the growth in ridership over the years, I’m disheartened by DOT commissioner Redeker’s determination that service should now be cut by 50%. What is the point of Transit Oriented Development if you’re going to cut the service? It behooves the legislature to find alternatives to these drastic cuts to this much-needed alternative.”

“The announcement by Governor Malloy regarding the postponement of transportation projects affects major rail and road projects that were scheduled in the Town of Clinton,” said **Clinton First Selectman Christine Goupil**. “The long-awaited renovation to the Clinton Railroad Station at a cost of \$18,000,000 will be delayed indefinitely. The project included adding a platform on the north side of the tracks, an over the track pedestrian bridge with associated elevators and upgraded parking. Our timetables have been cut over the years due to the limited platform access.”

“The proposed reduction in Shore Line East services would have a very detrimental effect on Westbrook,” said **Westbrook First Selectman Noel Bishop**. “Approximately 4 years ago, with funds from the State of Connecticut, a new train station was opened and subsequently increased the number of our residents using this station each day to commute to New Haven and other destinations. We have several local businesses that are highly dependent on the daily services of Shore Line East. It is imperative that we continue to fully support this vital transportation rail system for the residents of Westbrook and our surrounding Shoreline communities.”

“Shore Line East is a pivotal economic fixture for our small towns. Commuters are relying on us to support a robust mass transit system that gets them to work, on time, every day,” said **Rep. Jesse MacLachlan** (R-Clinton, Killingworth, and Westbrook). “We should be working to expand access to transit oriented development as rural and suburban communities increasingly look to travel into urban centers for employment. Cutting shoreline east is a step backward for our economy and should be opposed.”

“I believe Shore Line East is the wrong place to cut,” said **Rep. Devin Carney** (R- Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook). “Commuters and residents who live along the shoreline have relied on this service for work and weekend trips as an easy, more efficient way to travel. The state has invested in both Old Saybrook and Westbrook with new rail stations and should make improving the public transportation currently in place a priority, instead of cutting Shore Line East.”