

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### Miller Looks to Save Maybrook Freight Line



### *Serious Disrepair Jeopardizes Rail Line's Future*

**HARTFORD-** State Representative Larry Miller (R-122) has joined with other area legislators in an effort to preserve the Maybrook Freight Line, a rail line that runs between Derby and Danbury, west into New York, and connects with the state's Waterbury Branch that runs between Torrington and Metro North in Milford. The rail line structure has fallen into severe disrepair, jeopardizing the future of the line. Miller and the other legislators have proposed a bill to authorize bonding to preserve the railway.

The Maybrook Line is the only line in the state that can handle loads of 286,000 lbs. as well as oversized loads. It was previously owned between 1950 until the 1990's by New Haven Railroad, PennCentral and Conrail. None of these companies invested in upgrades or improvements to the line. Housatonic Railroad purchased the line in the early 1990's and made efforts to improve the line, but despite this, sections of track, ties and structures have failed.

Raised Bill 1160, An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State to Rehabilitate a Section of the Maybrook Railway Line had a public hearing last week before the Transportation Committee, and Representative Miller testified in favor of saving the aged railway.

"This line handles significant volumes of stone from quarries in Wallingford, Wauregan and Danbury," said Miller. "If the line is allowed to fail, it will mean an additional 50,000 one-way truck trips to transport that stone on an already congested highway network. That's not even taking into consideration the impact on commuters, and the loss of the key economic development tool that having that heavy load and wide freight capacity represents."

It is estimated that preserving the rail line will cost \$11.2 million. Those funds will allow for the replacement of 7.5 miles of rail, 37,000 ties and restore the roadbed over a 27 mile segment. The project could be done in three phases, which would reduce the overall and up front cost.

"If we are serious about fixing the problems with transportation in Connecticut, then we simply cannot allow the Maybrook Line to fail," said Miller. "Permitting that line to fail would increase the very burdens on our highway system that we are attempting to remedy in our overall approach to mass transit."

This session of the Connecticut General Assembly concludes at midnight, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007.