

## House Republican Press Release

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### Rep. Larry Miller: Time to Get Serious About Corrosion



#### ***State Officials and Utility Companies Listen to Legislator's Concerns***

HARTFORD—Corrosion isn't the most popular of topics among legislators or state officials but it's a problem that, if ignored, could result in serious, far-reaching consequences for Connecticut, an

expert said Thursday.

"It's a slow, slow killer," said Cliff Johnson, public affairs director of the Texas-based National Association of Corrosion Engineers (NACE). "It's not going to kill you tomorrow, but it will get you 15 years down the road."

Johnson was at the Capitol Aug. 28 at the invitation of state Rep. Larry Miller, who tracks transportation and infrastructure issues closely and has repeatedly called for greater attention toward maintenance.

Inside the conference room at the Legislative Office Building were representatives from several state agencies as well as private-sector outfits such as construction and utility companies.

Miller told everyone that the life expectancy of Connecticut bridges isn't what it should be—70 years instead of the 40-year state average. Miller, backed up by the experts from NACE, explained that wire rods inside bridges corrode and swell, causing concrete to crack, flake and fall to the ground. Such spalling is a safety hazard.

"God forbid if a chunk of concrete falls on someone's head," Miller said as he described a parking lot beneath the Moses Wheeler Bridge that crosses over the Housatonic River between Stratford and Milford.

Bridges were the focus of the session, but there was also talk about how corrosion affects water lines and pipes that carry steam that heats buildings. NACE representative Blake Fouracre described how bacteria can infiltrate water pipes through cracks caused by corrosion, mixing with water that's been cleaned at treatment plants.

"When we turn the tap on, we're not getting what we paid for," Fouracre said.

Even worse, ratepayers would eventually foot the bill to cover water lost through leaky pipes, Johnson said.

Failed or closed bridges disrupt traffic flow, and that affects the economy, Johnson said. What's more, many bridges carry pipelines or wires, so a collapse could be a bigger catastrophe than many people realize, he said.

Miller applauded recent efforts to push national legislation that pays greater attention to the issue of corrosion, with one bill requiring a corrosion plan be submitted for any federally-funded bridge project.

Miller said he hopes Department of Transportation officials considered corrosion as they crafted plans for pending bridge revitalization projects in the state. "It will save a ton of money," he said. "It's the right thing to do."

The 122<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District includes Shelton and Stratford.