

House Republican Press Release

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**REPRESENTATIVE SCRIBNER: BOND COMMISSION APPROVES
FUNDING FOR STUDY OF DANBURY RAIL LINE**



REPORT TO EVALUATE POTENTIAL UPGRADES

HARTFORD- State Representative David A. Scribner (R-Brookfield, Bethel) today announced the State Bond Commission has approved a \$3 million grant to conduct an environmental impact evaluation of the Danbury Branch Line Corridor, as well as evaluate improvement options that have been identified for the branch. The Bond Commission approved the item at its monthly meeting Friday, January 26 in Hartford.

The environmental impact study is necessary to comply with the Connecticut Environment Policy Act (CEPA). The funds will also evaluate options to improve the Danbury Rail Line to bring it up-to-date. One of the five improvement options previously identified would electrify the line, which will help increase utility of the branch, allowing for reduced travel time and more frequent service. Others options include extension of rail passenger service from Danbury to New Milford and modifications to the rails themselves.

“This funding is a positive step toward improving service for rail commuters in Western Connecticut,” said Rep. Scribner, who serves as Ranking Member (House Republican Leader) of the General Assembly’s Transportation Committee. “Impact on the environment will certainly have to be considered and well-documented prior to beginning any renovations. I look forward to seeing what options the study recommends, as upgrades are long overdue.”

The Danbury Branch Line is a 23.6 mile long single track rail line. As part of the Metro North commuter railroad, an arm of Greater New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority, it is part of the second largest commuter railroad in the nation. This rail line served stops as far north as Pittsfield, Massachusetts until 1971.