

To: deep.climatechange@ct.gov
Subj: CT must make active transportation a priority to address climate change
Date: July 31, 2015



Dear Commissioner Klee and the Governor's Council on Climate Change:

As advocates for active transportation and for making Connecticut a better place to bike and walk, we urge the Governor's Council on Climate Change to make active transportation one of its highest priorities.

With transportation accounting for 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions and passenger cars accounting for 45% of our transportation emissions, the connection between active transportation and climate change is clear. While electric vehicles and hybrids are great, for some reason Connecticut policymakers consistently overlook active transportation—biking and walking—as the ultimate zero-emission form of transportation. It's time to change that.

Government policy and focused execution drives results. As part of Connecticut's climate action plan, we believe Connecticut should:

- **Substantially reduce the percentage of people who commute to work alone by car.** In greater Hartford, that percentage is about 83%. Statewide, it's about 81%. That's deplorable.
- **Aggressively implement Connecticut's complete streets law**, both at the state and municipal levels (Conn. Pub. Acts 09-154 and Conn. Gen. Stat. Secs. 13a-153f and 13b-13a). The absence of networks of sidewalks and bike lanes keeps people in their cars. We need to substantially increase the miles of bona fide bike lanes and sidewalks, and make them connect within and among towns.
- **Specifically encourage and incentivize taking trips of three miles or less by bike or by foot.** Connecticut should adopt policies like those in place in Portland, Oregon, a longtime leader in active transportation. Portland has an express policy to encourage and incentivize taking trips of three miles or less by bike or by foot. The city adopted that policy specifically to accommodate year over year increases in traffic and to reduce traffic congestion. As a direct result of this policy, Portland is known across the globe as a world class cycling city.
- **Substantially increase bike-commuting rates.** Connecticut's rate is currently about half the nationwide average. Promoting employer incentives for bike to work programs would go a long way.
- **Conduct an ongoing, large scale, multi-media Share the Road campaign** (Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. CGS 14-232(13)(a)). Connecticut driving culture is not particularly hospitable to pedestrians and cyclists, in stark contrast to other New England states.
- **Continue to develop and connect greenways**, connect them to transit and complete streets, and consider them as important, economical transportation alternatives.
- **Lead by example in state government.** Offices in the executive, legislative and judicial branches should promote and facilitate a bike to work program and work toward Bicycle Friendly Business accreditation, which to its great credit, DEEP has attained. (Congratulations!)

We are eager to work with you to adopt and implement these ideas.

Sincerely,

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