



Connecticut League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

Rebuttal to opposition's points by those supporting the RT 11 Extension:

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Cost REBUTTAL:

Cost of completing RT 11 per se was estimated at \$400-\$600 million, projected at a time when labor and material costs were skyrocketing. If done soon, while labor is plentiful, and materials costs have stabilized, bids should come in substantially lower than that 2007 projection. 1/3rd of the above cost is to bridge rather than to fill and culvert stream crossings, an important environmental consideration that allows wildlife passage under the road and prevents loss of stream quality.

The project has been saddled with the additional \$400 million cost of improving the dysfunctional I-95/ I-395/ Rt-11 intersection in Flanders, needed even if Rt 11 is cancelled. If paid for by the toll on Rt 11, CT's portion of the I-95 improvement will not have to come from other scarce CT transportation funds, freeing up these funds for mass transit.

The tolls may, as argued, generate less income if traffic is diminished by their presence: that is an environmental benefit! And if it helps push people out of cars into rapid-transit buses, that is an added plus. If there is less revenue in the short run, the tolls will simply remain in place longer to pay off the bonding. Note that bonds that have a defined source of income for repayment (tolls) can be obtained at a significantly lower rate of interest, saving additional funds for other transportation projects.

Sprawl REBUTTAL:

Sprawl is increased when new roads open up access to undeveloped areas, but not here. Access and development are already here in the corridor. Moreover, a limited-access highway will prevent sprawl by blocking any driveways and cross-streets through this corridor. Existing open space thus becomes poorly-accessible, and if it is purchased as part of the project, as planned, a remarkable connected open space can be permanently protected. Mitigation is required for adverse impacts of building the road. Using the mitigation funds for land acquisition protects all of the species currently at significant risk from sprawl. Note that in the completed portion of RT 11, wide buffers and timely conservation purchases of inaccessible land have resulted in wide swaths of protected land at the headwaters of the Eightmile River, leaving the watershed downstream in exemplary condition (worthy of national designation as a Wild and Scenic River because of its outstanding resources).

The argument that local planning can simply regulate the land in the corridor to protect it is wishful thinking. Having spent 30 years on the Planning and Zoning Commission in Salem



trying to protect the environment, I learned that land owners must be compensated if you wish to take away their right to the 1-2 acre zoning currently in the corridor. Buying up the land for open space with mitigation funds saves money otherwise spent in court costs and regulatory policing by those trying to force open space protection on private property.

Safety REBUTTAL:

Safety is a priority concern of the Corps of Engineers, which has endorsed this project. Heavy traffic on an unlimited-access roads like Rts 85/82 is inherently dangerous. The completed portion of Rt 11 has invited faster speeds, yet safety has been dramatically improved. The Corps studied the "no-build" alternative and found it inadequate. The safety of using Rt 85/82 for evacuation of the coast in event of a nuclear disaster or hurricane is ludicrous, which is why the Federal Transportation Commission has put this completion on its high priority list.