



Legislation Text

File #: LM-2021-0398, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION OF THE NEW HAVEN BOARD OF ALDERS URGING GOVERNOR LAMONT AND THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO SUPPORT A TRANSPORTATION AND CLIMATE INITIATIVE PACKAGE THAT INCLUDES PROGRESSIVE FINANCIAL OFFSETS FOR LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME FAMILIES.

WHEREAS, as members of the Board of Alders of the city of New Haven, it is our duty to protect the health, safety, and financial security of our constituents;

WHEREAS, for decades, cars and trucks have created pollutants such as sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, particulate matter, and other types of hydrocarbons that have resulted in poor air quality in our city;

WHEREAS, these pollutants caused by transportation are known to worsen respiratory problems such as asthma and chronic lung disease; increase the risk that conditions such as cancer and heart disease will lead to premature death; and significantly increase human and financial health care costs;

WHEREAS, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, the city of New Haven ranks as the 5th most challenging city to live in for people with asthma in the United States;

WHEREAS, New Haven residents make over 1,600 hospital visits due to asthma every year;

WHEREAS, children, people of color, the elderly, people with pre-existing conditions, and people living in highly polluted areas are especially vulnerable to the health risks of transportation pollution;

WHEREAS, New Haven needs investments that expand access to reliable and convenient public bus and train service; provide funding for traffic calming; and expand opportunities for safe, active, and affordable transportation such as biking and walking;

WHEREAS, we must act to improve our city's public health while investing in clean infrastructure that will benefit all of our constituents and neighbors;

WHEREAS, in December of 2020 Governor Lamont signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Massachusetts, Rhode Island and the District of Columbia to commit the State of Connecticut to establish the Transportation and Climate Initiative Program ("TCI"), a program that would cap greenhouse gas pollution from motor vehicles through a market-based allowance program, the proceeds of which would be used to invest in clean transportation projects and related programs;

WHEREAS, TCI would make critical investments to create an affordable clean transportation system by funding improved bus service, bus electrification, traffic calming, and bike and pedestrian safety upgrades, leading to safer streets, more affordable commutes, and better air quality for our community;

WHEREAS, TCI would raise an estimated \$1 billion over ten years for the State's Special Transportation Fund to be spent on Connecticut's state and municipal transportation and infrastructure systems, creating local jobs in construction, public transportation, telecommunications, and manufacturing for our residents still recovering from the pandemic recession;

WHEREAS, TCI, like the Board of Alders legislative agenda, is built around environmental justice and would send 50% of all investment dollars (amounting to approximately \$500 million over ten years) to communities like New Haven that are hit hard by air pollution and lack a modern, accessible, and affordable transportation system;

WHEREAS, an Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Board-comprised of residents of impacted communities like New Haven-would provide oversight to guide these prioritized investments;

WHEREAS, TCI-funded projects will help lower average annual car repair costs, lower road maintenance expenditures, and allow more Connecticut and New Haven residents to take the bus, walk, or bike to get around;

WHEREAS, Connecticut's taxation system is extremely regressive, with working- and middle-class residents, especially those who live in urban areas, paying a higher percentage of their income in taxes than wealthy state residents;

WHEREAS, given our state's regressive taxation system, state leaders should ensure that all efforts to lower transportation emissions do not fall on the backs of low- and middle-income Connecticut residents;

AND WHEREAS, TCI's equity provisions would be improved through the creation of new programs that support low-income families and keep energy affordable, such as a progressive rate structure that lowers electricity costs for low-income families, an expansion of Connecticut's Earned Income Tax Credit, or other tax changes that ensure TCI does not make Connecticut even less affordable for the poor and the middle class;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in order to strengthen our economy and improve our city's public health, the Board of Alders of the city of New Haven urges Governor Lamont and the Connecticut General Assembly to support a legislative package that both enters Connecticut into the TCI compact and creates progressive financial offsets for low- and middle-income Connecticut families.