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CONTACT:

Steven Higashide
Senior Planner, Tri-State Transportation Campaign
860-796-6988

Statement of Tri-State Transportation Campaign Executive Director Veronica Vanterpool on the State Bond Commission's Friday approval of bonds for the I-84 widening in Waterbury and other transportation projects:

Many of the transportation projects approved by the State Bond Commission on Friday are needed. But the I-84 widening in Waterbury will take Connecticut down the wrong road.

The widening is estimated to cost up to \$500 million. To put this in perspective, Connecticut receives just \$486 million a year in federal funds for all road and bridge projects. While the Department of Transportation has made progress in tackling a long backlog of repair needs, the state's road conditions remain dismal and ten percent of bridges are structurally deficient. Committing to another pricey road widening means less funding available for maintenance, and slower going ahead.

Furthermore, decades of experience in Connecticut and across the country have shown that highway expansion leads to sprawl development, which increases traffic and quickly re-congests the road. A more sustainable path is to increase investment in transit and to develop around bus and rail stations. The list of approved transportation projects also included funding for transit and downtown redevelopment around transit stations in Stamford and New Britain. These are the types of smart, forward-looking projects the state needs more of. This widening was proposed several years ago; instead of advancing an outdated transportation proposal, ConnDOT should scrap this project and use this money to continue its more forward-thinking transportation vision.