



January 23, 2017

Ms. Rebecca Reyes-Alicea  
Program Manager  
Federal Railroad Administration  
One Bowling Green, Suite 249  
New York, NY 10004

Subject: NEC Future Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Ms. Reyes-Alicea,

As the Chairpersons of the Democratic, Republican, and Green Parties of New London, CT, we would like to take the opportunity to jointly submit feedback in opposition to the proposed Old Saybrook to Kenyon high-speed bypass.

We oppose the bypass for three primary reasons:

**1. The bypass will erode our tax base by taking property off the tax rolls and reducing the value of adjacent property.**

As a city of approximately 5.5 square miles, New London has a limited tax base. This tax base is further constrained because nearly 50% of the land within the city is exempt from property taxes. This proposal will remove more property from the tax rolls, creating an even greater burden on our residents, businesses, and property owners.

**2. The bypass will cause irreparable damage to the Hodges Square Historic District and the Winthrop Mill, both listed on the National Register of Historic Places.**

The bypass is proposed along the I-95 corridor, crossing the Thames River between the two spans of the Gold Star Bridge. This location will not only cause damage to and further isolation of the Hodges Square Historic District, but it also threatens to completely destroy the Winthrop Mill site, which is the homestead of city founder and colonial governor John Winthrop. Damage to these historic and cultural resources represents not only a loss of our local heritage, but that of the state and country as well.

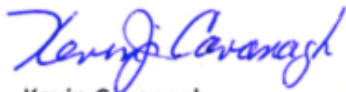
**3. The bypass will relocate high-speed rail service away from our intermodal transportation hub.**

The current rail station in New London is located in the heart of our Historic Downtown. It represents one piece of an intermodal transportation hub that includes commuter, regional, and intercity rail service; local and intercity bus service; local and interstate ferry services;

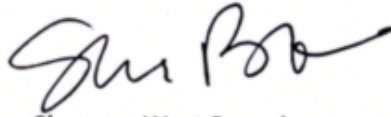
and easy motor vehicle access to and from I-95 and I-395. Removing one piece from this hub reduces the efficiency of our regional transportation network, and reduces the customer base for our downtown businesses.

It is rare that political parties reach consensus on an issue, but on this we are united. While we support efforts to improve the efficiency of rail travel, we oppose any actions that will erode our local tax base and destroy our cultural heritage. We respectfully request that the FRA strongly consider our concerns when developing the Selective Alternative, and urge you to remove the bypass from consideration prior to the Record of Decision.

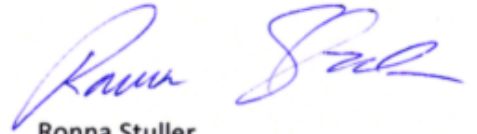
Respectfully Submitted,



Kevin Cavanagh  
Chairperson  
Democratic Town Committee



Shannon West Brenek  
Chairperson  
Republican Town Committee



Ronna Stuller  
Chairperson  
Green Town Committee