

# Testimony of Amy McLean

## Connecticut Director and Senior Policy Advocate

Public Hearing, March 8, 2021

### Before the Environment Committee:

Honorable Chairpersons Cohen and Gresko, Vice Chairpersons Palm and Slap and committee members.

Acadia Center appreciates this opportunity to provide written testimony. Acadia Center is a nonprofit research and advocacy organization committed to advancing the clean energy future. Acadia Center advocates for an equitable clean energy future for Connecticut, tackling regulatory and legislative energy policy, transportation, energy efficiency, beneficial electrification, utility innovation, and renewable energy.

## Testimony in support of S.B. No. 884 AN ACT REDUCING TRANSPORTATION-RELATED CARBON EMISSIONS.

### Legislation to Advance Transportation and Climate Justice

Connecticut has an opportunity to deliver the clean air and improved transportation options that the state's residents and businesses deserve. Chronic underinvestment—both in marginalized communities and in alternatives to personal vehicles—has resulted in congested roads, inadequate public transit, and neighborhoods lacking access to economic opportunities. At the same time, the imported fossil fuels used to power vehicles remain Connecticut's greatest contributor to climate change and a major source of the [air pollution that disproportionately harms](#) black and brown residents. It is time to end that toxic combination by passing legislation to advance a modern, equitable, and sustainable transportation future.

No single policy will fix these challenges overnight, but through Governor Lamont's *Act Reducing Transportation-Related Carbon Emissions* (SB.884) and a suite of other bills, Connecticut will deliver meaningful progress towards transportation and climate justice. While this hearing focuses on the equitable implementation of the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) Program through [SB.884](#), the following bills are also critical to the equitable transformation and decarbonization of transportation in Connecticut:

- *HB 6485 An Act Concerning the Connecticut Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate*
- *SB 882 An Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation and Home Energy Affordability*
- *SB 127 An Act Concerning the Sale of Electric Vehicles in the State*
- *HB 6551 An Act Concerning Environmental Air Quality*
- *HB 5619 An Act Concerning the Federal Clean Air Act Fee on Motor Vehicle Registrations*

- *SB 931 An Act Concerning Emission Standards for Medium and Heavy Duty Vehicles*
- *S.B. No. 576 An Act Concerning the Expansion of Passenger Rail Service on the Waterbury Branch of the Metro-North Commuter Railroad*
- *HB 5429 An Act Concerning Pedestrian Safety, Vision Zero Council, Speed Limits in Municipalities, Fines and Charges for Certain Violations, the Greenways Commemorative Account and Maintenance Work Zone and School Safety Enforcement*
- *HB 5423 - An Act Concerning the Expansion of Passenger Train and Ground Transportation Services in Eastern Connecticut*

## What is TCI?

The [Transportation and Climate Initiative](#) (TCI) is a collaboration between states stretching from New England to North Carolina with the goal of delivering regional solutions to transportation and climate challenges. Through that effort the states have developed the TCI Program (TCI-P), a cap-and-invest program designed to reduce pollution from gasoline and diesel fuels while generating a new source of funding for clean and equitable transportation investments.

Governor Lamont, the governors of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and the mayor of Washington, D.C. committed to participating in the TCI Program by signing on to the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) in December 2020. Acadia Center applauds their leadership and expects other states to join them in this effort in the coming months.

The TCI Program's framework is consistent across the region, as detailed in the [draft Model Rule](#), but the authority to implement the Program—and key decisions around *how* to implement it—are left to each participating state. Most notably, each state must determine how to invest its share of proceeds from the regional carbon allowance auctions; in Connecticut, that annual figure is projected to be over \$80 million in 2023, and over \$1 billion, cumulatively, through the program's first ten years.

## What does SB.884 do?

The bill filed by Governor Lamont, *An Act Reducing Transportation-Related Carbon Emissions*, is designed to ensure that the TCI Program will be implemented equitably in Connecticut. This legislation codifies key elements of the regional framework, adding necessary details specific to the state and strengthening regionally-agreed-upon equity provisions. If passed, [SB.884](#) will create an inclusive and transparent process to identify TCI-funded investments, it will center the voices of environmental justice communities and populations underserved by transit, and it will direct new resources towards the transition to a clean transportation future.

The TCI Program is projected to be a source of [economic growth, new jobs, and cleaner air](#). In Connecticut, the TCI Program is projected to deliver over [\\$360 million in annual health benefits](#) by 2032, including over 30 avoided deaths each year and over 2,000 avoided childhood asthma exacerbations. Through SB.884 and the additional policies outlined above, Connecticut can ensure that those benefits are felt in the communities that suffer most from transportation pollution and have the least access to reliable, clean mobility options.

Please support this important bill. Connecticut needs your help to make it the best state for all its residents and this will be one critical step in the right direction. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

**For more information:**

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