



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION **NEWS RELEASE**

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APRIL IN CONNECTICUT IS WORK ZONE AWARENESS MONTH

Governor M. Jodi Rell has announced that the month of April is being proclaimed Work Zone Awareness Month. "April is the month when many work zones begin to spring up across the state and motorists need to be reminded to use extra caution and pay attention in these zones. Work zones may be inconvenient to the motorist but they are a necessity. Without them, bridges couldn't be built, roads couldn't be maintained, utility companies couldn't provide their services, and emergency responders couldn't clear crashes from roads.

According to Department of Transportation statistics, there has been a 43% decrease in the number of total crashes in construction and maintenance zones in the last eight years. "We can attribute Connecticut's success in lowering the number of crashes in work zones to improvements in the design of work zones, and placing more focus on planning and implementation strategies to improve mobility and safety in work zones." remarked Acting DOT Commissioner James Boice. "In addition, the use of high visibility safety apparel for workers, improvements to signs and traffic control devices and use of protective devices such as barrier, crash trucks and better illumination makes it a safer environment for the worker and provides better guidance for the motorists."

Connecticut like other states and organizations promotes work zone awareness not only during the National Work Zone Awareness Week which is being held this year from April 7 -11 but throughout the entire year. Many people are invested in the health and safety of workers and motorists and strive to educate, train and enforce the laws and regulations related to work zones.

This year, the Connecticut General Assembly Transportation Committee and State Representative David Scribner of Connecticut's 107th District introduced Senate Bill 500, "AN ACT CONCERNING HIGHWAY WORK ZONE SAFETY" which will create a Highway Work Zone Safety Advisory Council to protect highway workers in work zones, and establish the offenses of "endangerment of a highway worker" and "aggravated endangerment of a highway worker". State Representative Bill Aman of the 14th District, as well as the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Connecticut Employees Union Independent (SEIU Local 511), the Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association of Connecticut, the Connecticut Council of Police Unions, Connecticut State Police Union, and the Connecticut Construction Industries Association, Inc, are supporters of this bill, believing that it will ensure the safety of highway work zones and highway workers.

During the public hearing, several DOT Maintenance workers spoke of the many close calls while working next to traffic and expressed their support, believing the bill will create stiffer penalties for careless drivers, and provide a forum to develop methods for increased work zone safety. The daughter of a DOT worker killed while working on the job, also spoke in support of the bill, believing that current penalties are not enough to penalize drivers who do not obey the laws regarding highway work zone safety.