



# State of Connecticut

SENATOR LEONARD A. FASANO  
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

34<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
300 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 3400  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591  
[www.SenatorFasano.com](http://www.SenatorFasano.com)

HARTFORD: (860) 240-8800  
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1421  
FAX: (860) 240-8306  
[Len.Fasano@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Len.Fasano@cga.ct.gov)

October 9, 2019

The Honorable Carlo Leone  
Chairman Transportation Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3500  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

The Honorable Roland J. Lemar  
Chairman Transportation Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2103  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Senator Leone and Representative Lemar:

I write regarding the Connecticut Port Authority and the immediate need for further hearings investigating the public allegations of untoward behavior at the Authority including statements made by a "whistleblower" to the CT Examiner and The Day.

I appreciate the efforts of the Transportation Committee to hold a hearing on August 20, 2019 regarding the actions of the Connecticut Port Authority. However, I also strongly feel that there is a need for a second public hearing to allow lawmakers to hear from Port Authority employees and board members, including an employee that has shared a public letter detailing alleged office conflicts.

If you are not inclined to hold a second hearing on this matter for any reason, I ask that you please let me know within the next week (by October 16, 2019). If you decline to hold a hearing I will ask the Republican ranking members of the Transportation Committee to hold a hearing. While the minority party cannot call a committee public hearing, our ranking members can hold an informational hearing that will allow us to invite and discuss these serious issues and allegations with staff and board members.

I am hopeful that there is bipartisan support to hold a second hearing together. On September 13, 2019 our colleagues, Senator Osten and Representative Conley, requested a follow-up hearing on the Connecticut Port Authority so "committee members can question current and past employees and officials." I strongly agree that having employees and board members appear before the Transportation Committee to answer questions is much needed. Now that there are also "whistleblower" statements available, I believe we have an obligation to hear from all sides.

Senator Leone and Representative Lemar  
October 9, 2019  
Page 2

Recently, the former office manager for the Authority, Gerri Lewis, purportedly contacted the CTE Examiner and the New London Day and issued a written statement. A copy of the statement is enclosed.

Though I cannot comment on the veracity of the statement, it contains significant allegations and contentions of excessive and wasteful spending, inappropriate expense claims, and lack of policies and procedures. She also makes the assertion that "Mr. Bates essentially ran the authority. For the most part, Mr. Matthews did not make any decision; instead he took his direction from Mr. Bates." You may recall that Mr. Matthews was on paid leave as a result of his conduct while Executive Director of the Authority.

Ms. Lewis's contentions add to the other allegations of questionable decisions made by members of the Authority and its board. Moreover, the circumstances surrounding her termination seem to merit a vetting by the legislature as well.

She concludes her statement that she is "willing to speak to any state or federal entity conducting an investigation into the activities of the Authority upon request." Accordingly, the Transportation Committee ought to continue its investigation of the alleged misdeeds at the Authority by reconvening its hearing and inviting testimony from employees, such as Ms. Lewis and Mr. Matthews and board members, such as Mr. Bates and Ms. Reemsnyder. As the allegations regarding the Authority's conduct overshadow a significant transaction being considered by the administration involving the State Pier, it is imperative that the Committee turn its attention back to this investigation immediately. We need to earn back the public's trust so that the state can move forward with many important projects involving Connecticut's ports. We need to restore public confidence.

I firmly believe that we need to hear from these key individuals to fully understand what has happened at the Port Authority and ensure we have all the information to take necessary steps to restore public trust and move forward with important projects. Any whistleblower should be heard and given the opportunity to share what they know and allegedly witnessed. And any past leader of the Port Authority needs to be held accountable and answer questions as well to give their side and explain the full situation.

I look forward to working with you both to address this matter.

Sincerely,



Len Fasano,  
Senate Republican Leader