



# Disability Rights Connecticut

“Connecticut’s protection and advocacy system”

846 Wethersfield Avenue  
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Justice. Community. Inclusion.

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Disability Rights Connecticut, Inc., the “protection and advocacy” organization for the State of Connecticut, **has filed an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Complaint with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regarding Connecticut’s New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail Program (NHHS Rail). This complaint seeks to ensure that individuals with disabilities can enjoy substantially equal access to the rail service compared to individuals without disabilities.** As Connecticut’s “protection and advocacy” organization, Disability Rights Connecticut is empowered to investigate the treatment of people with disabilities and advocate on their behalf.

Representatives from NHHS Rail have indicated that the service will begin operations in violation of the ADA and ADA regulations when it begins operations on June 16, 2018. The trains which will be used to provide the service on the NHHS Rail do not have accessible bathrooms. No accessible bathrooms will be available on any of the trains until at least November of 2018. CT DOT’s proposed solution was to place accessible bathroom trailers at the train stations to make up for the lack of accessible bathrooms on the trains. This proposal fails to address the lack of accessible bathrooms on the train. It still treats people with disabilities differently and does not afford individuals with disabilities with substantially equal access compared to individuals without disabilities.

The complaint filed today by Disability Rights Connecticut asks that the FRA immediately investigate this issue and order the Connecticut Department of Transportation and *CTrail* to bring the NHHS Rail into compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Department of Transportation’s ADA regulations.

Earlier this year, Jim Redeker, the Connecticut Department of Transportation Commissioner stated that the plans for this railroad have been “a monumental undertaking” that involved “years of intense coordination.” Unfortunately for Connecticut’s citizens with disabilities, the rights of people with disabilities were not considered during the process. Says Michelle Duprey, “[t]he failure of the DOT to make the “new” rail cars accessible for the launch of this service is not an oversight but a conscious decision to disregard the rights of people with disabilities guaranteed by our state’s Constitution and the Americans with Disabilities Act.”

Redeker also called this new rail service “a model for the country” and stated that “Connecticut should take immense pride in this achievement and celebrate not just the completion of the construction, but the beginning of a bright new transportation and economic development future for the state.” Gretchen Knauff, Executive Director at Disability Rights Connecticut sees it a little differently. “How can you begin a bright new transportation era while treating people with disabilities like second class citizens?”

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