



4/23/26

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Westerly Rail Advocates
c/o Sen. Victoria Gu
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Senator Gu,

The Garde Arts Center is a regional cultural destination serving a broad and diverse audience across Southeastern Connecticut and beyond. As Southeastern Connecticut's nonprofit home for the performing arts, cinema, and education, the Garde presents live performances, films, and community programming year-round - often up to seven days a week - welcoming thousands of patrons to downtown New London.

With limited parking in the city and increasing congestion along Interstate 95 - the primary corridor connecting Rhode Island and the rest of Connecticut - the expansion of commuter rail service is critically important to our continued growth and accessibility. Strengthening public transportation options will not only improve audience access, but also advance regional goals around sustainability, economic vitality, and cultural tourism.

The Garde Arts Center is proud to support the proposed modernization and infrastructure enhancements at the Westerly Train Station. Enabling Shore Line East service to access Westerly would significantly expand our reach into Rhode Island and, with potential future connections to MBTA service, create new pathways for audiences traveling from further north.

We strongly advocate for this initiative, which will have a lasting and positive impact on the regional economy, the arts sector, and the vitality of our downtown. We fully support your efforts to coordinate the investments necessary to bring this vision to fruition.

Best regards,

Jeanne Sigel

Director of Development and Community Outreach
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A non-profit regional center for the performing arts, cinema, and education generously supported by gifts from the community, founded in 1985, and built in 1926.

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