

Bus bill signed

Will connect Claremont with Lebanon

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By Damien Fisher | Aug 28, 2014



Gov. Maggie Hassan signs House Bill 650, allowing for the creation of a public/private partnership to provide bus service between Claremont and Lebanon.

CLAREMONT — Gov. Maggie Hassan signed House Bill 650 Wednesday morning, clearing the way for the creation of a bus service between Claremont and Lebanon.

“It’s going to help us improve our transportation infrastructure, which is critical for economic growth,” she said.

Hassan signed the bill during a ceremony held at River Valley Community College, surrounded by the many state representatives who have worked on the bus service over the years. Three of Claremont’s four state representatives, Democrats John Cloutier, Andrew O’Hearne, and Ray Gagnon, co-sponsored the bill. Republican Joe Osgood voted against the bill.

Hassan heard about the need for the bus service even before she was elected.

“People in Claremont have been insistent,” she said.

The legislation allows for the Newport-based Community Alliance Transportation Service to start seeking a combination of federal grant funding and private funds to get the service off the ground. The proposed route for the bus service will use Route 120 to connect the two cities, and the communities in between such as Cornish and Plainfield.

Claremont City Manager Guy Santagate said that more than 2,000 people travel between Claremont and Lebanon every day. A public transportation system would make it easier for people to go to work, or go shopping in either community.

“We want to become a Lebanon, or a Keene,” he said. “This helps us get there.”

The service will also help River Valley Community College, as it will be the location for one of the stops, strengthening the connection between the college, and the cities of Claremont and Lebanon, according to Hassan.

The bill comes at a time when Hassan is seeking to cut tuition at community colleges, and improve the transportation backbone of the state. All of this will lead to great economic development for New Hampshire, she said.

Both cities will benefit from the service, Hassan added, also noting that she sees Claremont as vibrant and growing.

“I always know I’m going in the right direction when I come to Claremont,” she said.