

April 9, 2013

Massachusetts General Court
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Legislator:

We appreciate the Legislature's leadership in recognizing the long-standing underfunding of the state's transportation system. The Joint Ways and Means proposal unveiled last Tuesday represents a step forward in this debate, and we recognize that raising revenue – for any cause – is never easy. Many of us have faced similar dilemmas in raising meals or hotel taxes, and in supporting property tax overrides. Positive contributions of the Joint Ways and Means proposal include ending the practice of borrowing to cover MassDOT operating expenses, forward funding the RTAs, and resolving the FY2014 deficit at the MBTA.

However, we are concerned that the proposal unveiled last week will not provide sufficient funds to avoid significant increases in tolls, fares, and fees (especially after FY2016) and to ensure the repair and construction of important capital projects we all have in our cities. These projects include, but are not limited to, the Green Line Extension (which is a legally mandated project), repair of the I-91 viaduct in Springfield, South Station expansion, South Coast Rail, plus numerous road, bridge, sidewalk, and bikepath projects in all of our communities, many of which would enhance public safety and reduce congestion. These projects create jobs and would provide both legislators and local officials with real evidence that revenues raised through this proposal resulted in concrete improvements on the ground.

There are several amendments and proposals before you that would strengthen the legislation you are now considering. We encourage you to look carefully at these recommendations and to increase the amount of funding in the legislation so that the state can start work on building a 21st century transportation system that meets the needs of the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone
Somerville

Mayor Kimberley Driscoll
Salem

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno
Springfield

Mayor William A. Flanagan
Fall River

Mayor Lisa Wong
Fitchburg

Mayor Carlo DiMaria
Everett

Mayor Robert J. Dolan
Melrose

Mayor Michael J. McGlynn
Medford

Mayor Jonathan F. Mitchell
New Bedford

Jay Ash, City Manager
Chelsea

Mayor Thomas C. Hoye, Jr.
Taunton

Mayor Henrietta Davis
Cambridge