

## Broad Coalition Calls for Reduced Police Influence in MBTA Management

- By [Christian MilNeil](#)
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*Some of the organizations sponsoring a petition to the MBTA for the agency to acknowledge police brutality and prevent law enforcement from using the transit system to limit its riders' freedoms.*

A large coalition of community groups, environmental organizations, and transit advocates are petitioning the MBTA to acknowledge the threats of police brutality and take steps to ensure that the region's transit system will not be used as a tool for law enforcement.

“Transit is a public good and necessity at all times. The T must remain a safe and reliable provider of access for all, whether through the course of a public health crisis or during lawful protests. Freedom of movement is freedom,” [states the petition](#), which is being sponsored by over a dozen organizations including Alternatives for Community & Environment, Community Labor United, Boston Student Advisory Council, Clean Water Action, GreenRoots, Action 4 Equity, Youth on Board, MA Senior Action Council, The Alliance for Business Leadership, Massachusetts Sierra Club, Transportation for Massachusetts, ACLU Massachusetts, Conservation Law Foundation, LivableStreets Alliance, Youth on Board, TransitMatters, Green Justice Coalition and Institute for Transportation and Development Policy.

The organizations praise the MBTA for [its June 5 decision to stop using its buses to transport police from other agencies to peaceful protests around Boston](#), but also warn that “there is still much work to be done.”

The petition asks the T to “acknowledge racism and police brutality,” “prepare a plan to remain in operation during times of protest,” and to “ensure the MBTA will not delegate operational decision making to law enforcement” and ensure that MBTA drivers and vehicles won't be commandeered to transport people who have been arrested.

The first request – for the T to acknowledge police brutality – appears to be a direct rebuke of a [June 3 media statement from](#) MBTA General Manager Steve Poftak, who wrote that he wanted to “offer my support for the people who are marching for justice in our communities” but failed to address or acknowledge the root causes of the protests.

In fact, the majority of the statement attempted to defend the agency’s Transit Police and [their disastrous decision to close downtown T stations](#) as night fell after a day of peaceful protests on May 31.

A fifth demand asks the T to “decriminalize ridership and fully fund service in Black and brown communities” and for the T’s governing body, the Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB), to commission “a full and detailed review of the MBTA police budgets and policies.”

Many of the petition’s sponsoring organizations are expected to testify at today’s meeting of the FMCB, which begins at noon.

This story will be updated.