Governor Charlie Baker  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

October 10, 2019

Dear Governor Baker,

While the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance applauds your administration’s efforts to reduce pollution in the transportation sector, we have serious concerns with the direction in which the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI) is taking our state.

Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Kathleen Theoharides claims the difference between TCI and a gas tax is the point of regulation. This is irrelevant to consumers who will soon be paying more at the pump to support increased government spending. State Rep. William Straus, the House chairman of the Transportation Committee, recently described TCI as a gas tax, saying “All states raise their gas tax the same amount at the same time and agree not to call it a gas tax, but I think the public is smarter than that.”

In an October 1 story, the Boston Globe reported that, “…state officials said they likely have authority under the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act to implement the agreement without such a vote.” This raises the concern that such a far-reaching tax could be implemented without the legislative approval process.

Make no mistake: this is a very slippery slope for Massachusetts. Although this is still in the early stages, lawmakers from other states in the TCI agreement are seeking legislative approval. Your administration, whether legally required or not, should also act in good faith and seek the same. There must be an open and transparent legislative process on the details of the agreement.

Sincerely,

Laurie Belsito  
Legislative Director  
Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance