



November 7, 2019

Dear Legislator,

While the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance applauds Governor Charlie Baker and his administration's efforts to reduce pollution in the transportation sector, we have serious concerns with the direction in which the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) is taking our state, all without explicit legislative approval.

While taxpayers are the most obvious victims of this situation, individual legislators are greatly affected as well. Rank and file members are being stripped of their prerogatives and denied an opportunity to carry out the duty they were elected to perform. Taxpayers and constituents deserve more and you should demand more.

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 for this regressive tax scheme. State Rep. William Straus, House Chairman of the Transportation Committee, recently eluded to 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."*

This raises the concern that such a far-reaching tax could be implemented without explicit legislative approval process. 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."* We would argue that authorization, cast on a voice vote over 10 years ago, with no knowledge of today's proposal, is not sufficient to enact such a significant piece of policy.

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. Governor Baker's administration, whether legally required or not, should also act in good faith and seek legislative approval. If he doesn't, it's your job to hold him accountable. There must be an open and transparent legislative process on the details of the agreement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurie Belsito". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurie Belsito
Legislative Director