

# The Boston Globe

## T should always keep costs low, but clearly needs more state funding

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There's no question that MassDOT should be keeping costs as low as possible ("Report says T overpays for maintenance," Metro, June 20). The Pioneer Institute's report on the T's bus maintenance costs, however, leaves out mention of the reforms adopted in the 2009 transportation overhaul that saved taxpayers money through limiting MBTA employees' pensions, moving employees onto the more cost-effective state health plan, and reducing staff. The bottom line on costs: We all agree vigilance is the key.

But we cannot miss the forest for the trees. It's increasingly clear that we have shortchanged the MBTA for years. Chronic underfunding causes delays, compromises safety, and harms job creation. Another wake up call: A recent report by Transportation for America shows hundreds of structurally deficient bridges that aren't being addressed due to inadequate funding.

State representatives and state senators have approved a compromise transportation funding bill, which includes additional reforms to control costs. But, even the Senate's proposed higher funding amount would not have gotten us close enough.

Overpaying for anything, especially where our tax dollars are concerned, is wrong. But the much bigger problem we face is a near-starved public transportation system with decades-old subway cars crossing deficient tracks and bridges. We need to invest in public transportation to bring the Commonwealth into the 21st century.

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