



Web: t4ma.org Twitter: @T4MASS Phone: (413) 367-T4MA Email: info@t4ma.org

Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Revenue September 29, 2015

Dear Chairs Rodrigues and Kaufman, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments **in support of S1474/H2698, An Act relative to regional transportation ballot initiatives.**

Transportation for Massachusetts (T4MA) is a statewide coalition of 58 organizations from around the commonwealth, all dedicated to supporting transportation investments that create safe, affordable transportation choices for everyone in Massachusetts. Our coalition is committed to creating walkable, bikeable, and transit-rich communities that provide vibrant places for residents to live, work and play while preserving our natural areas and resources. We are committed to supporting the wise and efficient use of public resources through promoting smart growth.

T4MA supports this legislation because it will give cities and towns an additional option, through a ballot measure, to fund crucial local and regional transportation investments. Across the Commonwealth, there are significant transportation funding needs at the state, regional, and local levels. Municipalities and regions need more money to address overdue road repairs, structurally deficient bridges, transit infrastructure and vehicles, trails and paths, and amenities like bike lanes and sidewalks that make up complete streets serving all road users.

In the context of limited funding from the federal and state levels, giving local communities the option to raise their own funds should be part of the answer to our transportation funding needs. Under this legislation, the funds raised would be dedicated to transportation by law. To be clear, we do not believe that passage of this bill would be the full solution to our funding needs, but we believe it can be a key part of it.

In other states, regional ballot initiatives are regularly used to finance transportation investments. States in which there have been recent successful ballot votes include California, Colorado, Georgia, Missouri, Idaho, and Louisiana. The average rate of passage for transportation ballot initiatives is approximately 70%. In November, 2014, 71% of the 59 initiatives on the ballot nationwide passed (<http://www.cfte.org/elections>). Because voters appreciate having a direct role, know funds are dedicated by law to transportation, and know specifically what they are voting for, these initiatives have a high rate of passage.

There is support for this concept in Massachusetts. MassINC Polling Group has found little opposition in polls over the past three years. In 2015, 70% of respondents agreed that cities and towns should have “the authority to place transportation funding measures for their specific area on the ballot for voters to approve or reject.” Forty-five percent of voters strongly agreed. Similar polls in 2013 and 2012 found 75% and 73% of voters, respectively, agreed with this statement.

Executive Committee: 495/MetroWest Partnership • Alternatives for Community and Environment • Conservation Law Foundation
Environmental League of Massachusetts • Kendall Square Association • LISC • Massachusetts Public Health Association • MASSPIRG
Metropolitan Area Planning Council • Pioneer Valley Planning Commission • WalkBoston



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Again, T4MA strongly supports S1474 and H2698, and hopes that the Committee will report these bills out favorably. If you have any questions for us or require additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to Charlie Ticotsky, T4MA's Policy Director, at cticotsky@t4ma.org or 781-354-5155. Thank you for your consideration of our perspective.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kristina Egan', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Kristina Egan
Director