



May 21, 2021

Senator Karen Spilka, President
Massachusetts Senate
24 Beacon St, Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Michael Rodrigues, Chairman
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon St, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Dear President Spilka and Chairman Rodrigues,

I am writing to share the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce's position on the following proposed transportation amendments to the Senate Ways and Means FY 2022 budget proposal:

SUPPORT Amendment #1: Permanent MBTA Governance Board

The Chamber supports a permanent Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority board of directors (MBTA Board) to replace the Fiscal and Management Control Board and recommends three refinements to strengthen the proposed board's operations. The new MBTA Board must have the ability to operate independently, therefore we recommend granting the MBTA Board the authority to appoint the general manager position. To strengthen and maintain the Board's independence, any ex officio members should not have voting powers. Finally, to reflect its large financial contribution to the system, the City of Boston should have a designated seat on the MBTA Board.

SUPPORT Amendment #23: Transportation Network Companies

The Chamber strongly supports increased TNC fees and data collection requirements. This amendment reintroduces language that was [vetoed by Governor Baker as part of the Transportation Bond Bill](#). With a date for full reopening set, we must prepare to create and manage a 21st century transportation system.

One tool to create a 21st century transportation system should be changing the fee structure for TNC trips. While commuting patterns will change to a degree, TNCs will continue to draw riders away from public transit and contribute to congestion, especially in urban areas. The state should structure fees to incentivize shared transportation and distribute the revenue to invest in regional transportation authorities across the state. The Chamber also strongly supports an additional surcharge on luxury rides, which introduces a greater degree of equity to transportation funding mechanisms.

SUPPORT Amendment #12: Shovel Ready MBTA Capital Projects

The Chamber supports intentional investment to design and prepare shovel ready projects that improve transit options and reduce carbon emissions. The MBTA will be better positioned to secure and deploy federal funding when it becomes available if it has shovel-ready projects. [Accelerating project delivery](#) is key to ensuring the MBTA creates the 21st century transportation system the region needs to thrive.

Support: Amendment #7 Commuter Benefits

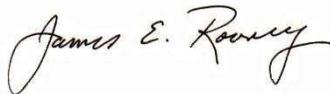
The Chamber supports aligning the state with the federal tax code by increasing the amount of public transit costs that can be paid with pre-tax income from \$140 per month to \$265 per month. This change would promote public transit usage by simplifying the process for employers who wish to provide pre-tax commuter benefits and make public transit a more affordable commuting option for riders. We also support the expansion of the commuter tax deduction to include bike repair costs and bike share costs, as this helps encourage alternative forms of transportation in the commonwealth.

OPPOSE Amendment #4: Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) Operating Assistance

The Chamber opposes this amendment because it eliminates the requirement that \$3.5 million in Regional Transit Authority (RTA) funding be distributed as performance-based grants. We support the funding being tied to performance-based grants because these grants encourage RTAs to explore ways to improve service in their regions. We encourage RTAs to work with large employers in their regions to ensure that service is meeting the needs of employees as we continue to return to the workplace.

The Chamber looks forward to continuing to work with the Legislature on both the FY2022 budget and improving our transportation infrastructure. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James E. Rooney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

James E. Rooney
President and CEO

CC: Members of the Massachusetts Senate