



June 10, 2020

Senate President Karen Spilka
Massachusetts Senate
State House, Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senate President Spilka,

I am writing to submit testimony on behalf of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce on S.2746 *An act financing improvements to municipal roads and bridges*. While many aspects of this bill provide enhanced oversight of the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA), certain provisions can be strengthened to ensure a well-managed system.

The Chamber supports the creation of a permanent Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority board of directors (MBTA Board) to replace the Fiscal and Management Control Board which would otherwise sunset on June 30, 2020. And while we support the expanded number of seats on the Board as outlined in the bill, we urge you to include a permanent seat for the City of Boston to reflect its large financial contributions to the system.

To ensure a well-managed transit system, the new MBTA Board must have the ability to operate independently. To this end, we support the provision granting the MBTA Board the authority to appoint the general manager position. We also support the provision that implements the MBTA Safety Review Panel's recommendation to require fewer meetings. This will allow the MBTA staff to refocus on safety and improved operations rather than continuously preparing for Board meetings. However, to strengthen and maintain the Board's independence, we believe any ex officio members should not have voting powers.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever that the state prioritizes the MBTA's smooth, efficient, and safe operations. By authorizing the MBTA Board to continue the work of the FMCB this legislation provides some of the tools needed to maintain strong and independent oversight of the MBTA system. The Chamber looks forward to continuing to be a resource to you as you work to address the transportation needs of the Commonwealth. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'James E. Rooney'.

James E. Rooney
President & CEO

cc: Members of the Massachusetts Senate