



December 11, 2013

Representative Antonio Cabral
House Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets
Room 466, State House
Boston, MA 02133

RE: H3763 An Act Financing Improvements to the Commonwealth's Transportation System

Dear Chairman Cabral:

On behalf of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), thank you for the opportunity to offer our thoughts on *An Act Financing Improvements to the Commonwealth's Transportation System*. As the regional planning agency for the Greater Boston area, MAPC has long been a proponent of increased investment in transportation infrastructure and has been actively involved in the discussion surrounding transportation finance reform in recent months. We believe that the Commonwealth's transportation system is in desperate need of investments; that new, sufficient revenue is needed to make those investments; and that a long-term solution is needed to enable these investments to be made strategically.

The capital investments proposed in H3763 would enable a wide range of projects in both the MAPC region and across the Commonwealth to move from the drawing board to reality. Projects such as the Green Line Extension, South Coast Rail, and the expansion of South Station are all vitally important in keeping the region's economy moving forward efficiently and sustainably. The proposed investments for the modernization of MBTA subways, buses, and signal systems are long overdue and are necessary to move our transportation system towards the 21st century system that we need. Increased spending for regional transit authorities (RTA's) will allow those agencies to bring expanded, more reliable service to the communities they serve. Investments in the Commonwealth's roads and bridges are also critical, and will increase safety and reduce congestion.

We would suggest that the Committee consider the addition of a multi-year authorization for the Chapter 90 program to this bond bill. The Chapter 90 Program is the primary way by which municipalities maintain and construct local roads. In recent years, while funding for the program has increased, the timing of the disbursements has been inconsistent. Incorporating Chapter 90 into a long-range plan such as this would allow cities and towns to know ahead of time how much funding they will be receiving and they will be able to begin critical road and bridge projects at the beginning of the construction season.

We also believe that investments need to be made in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. We respectfully ask the Committee to consider adding the Active Streets Certification Program as proposed in S68/H3091, *An Act relative to active streets and healthy communities*, to the Committee's version of this bond bill. This certification program would encourage cities and towns across the Commonwealth to implement Complete Streets policies by creating a small grant program for which they would become eligible after taking certain actions including passing a Complete Streets bylaw or ordinance.

The presence of Complete Streets infrastructure such as improved sidewalks and bicycle facilities encourages an active, healthy lifestyle and reduces auto dependency. While some cities and towns in Massachusetts have already taken steps to implement Complete Streets, this program would provide the

60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111 • 617-451-2770 • Fax 617-482-7185 • www.mapc.org

necessary incentives to encourage even more cities and towns do so and we hope that it will be included as part of this legislation.

The statewide scope of H3763 underscores the fact that the issues of insufficient funding for transportation and aging infrastructure are not unique to any one region of the Commonwealth. From the Berkshires to Cape Cod and everywhere in between, our entire transportation system is in need of sufficient investment. The long-term range of this proposed capital plan will allow for investments across the Commonwealth to be made strategically, encouraging growth and economic development in a manner that is both equitable and sustainable.

Transportation, the backbone of a thriving economy, is crucial to every aspect of life in Massachusetts, connecting workers to jobs, businesses to markets, students to schools, and residents and visitors to cultural and recreational resources. Action is needed now to put transportation on a sound financial footing and build the 21st century system that will enable us to meet our economic and environmental goals, and a sufficient transportation bond bill is a fundamental piece of the puzzle.

Thank you again for providing this opportunity to outline MAPC's strong support on H3763. My staff and I are available to answer any questions you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email, mdraisen@mapc.org, or phone (617) 451-2770.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc D. Draisen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marc" being the most prominent.

Marc D. Draisen
Executive Director, MAPC