



June 24, 2022

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The Honorable Bruce Tarr
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Subject: **Recommendations for Language to Strengthen Rail Electrification Provisions of Climate Bill, Amendment S.2842, Section 53**

Dear Representative Roy, Senator Creem, Representative Chan, Senator Barrett, Representative Jones, Senator Tarr:

The Fairmount Indigo Transit Coalition (FITC) writes in support of “An Act Driving Climate Policy Forward,” bill numbers Amendment S.2852, especially Section 5, and we recommend language to strengthen the bill. We support future changes on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Fairmount Line that will improve access, affordability, and air quality. FITC is a diverse coalition of organizations and businesses working to expand affordable transit service to Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. Members include Action for Equity, Alternatives for Community & Environment, Codman Square Neighborhood

Development Corporation, Conservation Law Foundation, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, Fairmount Indigo Community Development Corporation Collaborative, Four Corners Main Street, Greater Four Corners Action Coalition, Mattapan Food and Fitness, Newmarket Business Improvement District, Project R.I.G.H.T., SouthWest Boston Community Development Corporation, and TransitMatters.

We recommend adding the following italicized, underlined language to Section 53 of Amendment S.2842:

SECTION 53. (a) The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority shall develop and implement short-term, medium-term and long-term plans for each line of the rail system ensuring that the rail is fully integrated into the commonwealth's transportation system and designed to make the system more productive, equitable and decarbonized. Each plan shall maximize the ridership returns on investment and shall be designed to meet statewide greenhouse gas emissions limits established in chapter 21N of the General Laws.

(b)(1) The authority shall include in the short-term plan immediate action items to run electric locomotive service along the Providence/Stoughton line, the Fairmont line and the line from the cities of Boston to Everett to Chelsea to Revere to Lynn to Salem to Beverly. The plan shall include, but not be limited to: (i) detailed critical path schedule for each phase; (ii) cash flow needs organized by fiscal year through completion of each phase; (iii) a regional strategy to receive all necessary environmental approvals and permits; and (iv) identifying needs from utilities to achieve adequate and redundant power to update the system. The plan shall include target completion dates not later than December 31, 2024 for Fairmont line and the line from the cities of Boston to Everett to Chelsea to Revere to Lynn to Salem to Beverly, a conceptual work plan and a schedule outlining the work to be pursued in 2022 and 2023. The authority shall include, in any capital plan approved after the effective date of this act, purchases necessary to begin the transition to electric service on the aforementioned rail lines and no agreement to purchase commuter rail trains shall be for diesel locomotives after December 31, 2030. The plan shall include that the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority shall commence construction on the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line to support rail electrification no later than December 31, 2024 and operate electric service in 2025 between South Station and Readville. The plan shall also include that the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority shall commence construction on the Newburyport/Rockport Commuter Rail Line to support rail electrification no later than December 31, 2024, and operate electric service in 2025 between North Station and Beverly."

(2) The authority shall include in its medium- and long-term plans a comprehensive and specific plan to electrify the remainder of the commuter rail fleet for all lines as necessary to maximize the ridership returns on investment and meet statewide greenhouse gas emissions limits and sublimits established in chapter 21N of the General Laws. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, necessary updates to layover and maintenance facilities, necessary infrastructure upgrades and a schedule for fleet design, testing, procurement and deployment.

(c) The authority shall publish and receive public comment on its short-term plan under paragraph (1) of subsection (b) by November 1, 2022 or 180 days after the effective date of this act, whichever is later. The authority shall publish and receive public comment on plans required by (a) and its medium-term and long-term plans under paragraph (2) of said subsection (b) by December 31, 2023 or 180 days after the effective date of this act, whichever is later.

FITC is eager to see electrification on the Fairmount Line by 2024. Massachusetts' communities, especially those most impacted by pollution, should benefit from electric transit. The Fiscal and Management Control Board, created by the Legislature, voted in 2019 for early electrification action on the Fairmount Line, which is well-positioned to benefit from faster, more frequent, electrified service. The Fairmount Line is the MBTA's shortest, with nine stops along its 9.2 miles of track. Heavy diesel locomotives are ill-suited for the line's short station spacing. Subway-style electrified train cars will be able to cut the end-to-end trip time on the Fairmount Line from a half-hour to 18 minutes. The MBTA's Rail Vision team found that electrified rail in the urban core would reduce vehicle miles traveled by 166-428 million per year, and total trips by 18-36 million per year.

One fifth of the population of the City of Boston lives within one-half mile of the Fairmount line, 83% of whom are Black or Latino. Currently, these residents are faced with barriers to accessing rapid public transit, pushing them into cars, underfunded and inefficient buses, and driving congestion. Reducing public transportation travel times to and from the job centers in Boston and along the waterfront means more economic opportunity, a larger pool of housing choices for commuters, and less reliance on fossil fuels. Deploying modern electric trains and finishing high platform work will enable the MBTA to provide a world-class service that will change lives along the corridor and unlock economic opportunity for these communities.

Environmental justice populations disproportionately suffer the negative impacts of transportation emissions. On average, residents of color in Massachusetts are exposed to pollution from vehicle emissions that are 26 to 36 percent higher than the exposure of white residents. As Massachusetts transitions to electric transportation, electrification of the Fairmount Line must be a priority. Please direct any questions to Staci Rubin (SRubin@clf.org) or Marilyn Forman (Marilyn@csndc.com).

Sincerely,

Members of the Fairmount Indigo Transit Coalition:

Action for Equity, Alternatives for Community & Environment, Codman Square
Neighborhood Development Corporation, Conservation Law Foundation, Dorchester Bay
Economic Development Corporation, Fairmount Indigo Line Community Development

Corporation Collaborative, Four Corners Main Street, Greater Four Corners Action Coalition, Mattapan Food & Fitness Coalition, Newmarket Business Association, Project R.I.G.H.T., SouthWest Boston Community Development Corporation, and TransitMatters. Fairmount Indigo Transit Coalition

Additional supporters:

All In Energy, Inc.
Boston Clean Energy Coalition
Boston Climate Action Network
Canton Residents for a Sustainable Equitable Future
Climate Code Blue
Fairmount Greenway Task Force
Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution, Climate Change Task Force
H.E.R.O Nurturing Center Inc
John MacDougall, co-chair, Transportation Working Group, 350 Mass
LivableStreets Alliance
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Michael Prokosch, Dorchester resident
Mothers Out Front Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, Roslindale, Hyde Park
Neponset River Watershed Association
Newton EV Task Force
Resist the Pipeline
Sierra Club Massachusetts