



Representative Jeff Roy
House Chair, Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
State House Room 43
Boston, MA 02133

April 19, 2022

Dear Chair Roy,

Our organizations share the goal of improving the Commonwealth's transportation system in order to create a more accessible, affordable, sustainable, safe, and equitable future for all. We also share a commitment to reduce pollution from transportation to combat climate change and improve public health for residents statewide.

We strongly believe that climate policy must account for transportation. The Commonwealth must not miss this opportunity to align its transportation policy with our ambitious environmental goals. The Committee's leadership is urgently needed.

The passage of the [next generation climate roadmap legislation](#) sets important benchmarks for decarbonization and climate policy in the Commonwealth. To meet these goals the legislature must seriously address the transportation sector, which is the largest source of GHG emissions in the state.

While you consider another House climate bill for this session, we encourage you to include the following provisions, in pending and previously passed legislation, to move the Commonwealth toward electrification of vehicle fleets for private cars and trucks and public transportation, and also provide equitable incentives for residents to move away from carbon-fueled vehicles, promote mode shift away from single occupancy vehicles, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and lower GHG emissions from transportation:

H.3088/S.1890 *An Act relative to commuter transit benefits*

- This bill aligns state pre-tax transit commuter benefits with federal pre-tax transit commuter benefits, bringing Massachusetts in line with 47 other states that do so. The bill also expands eligible benefits to include RTA passes, bicycle-commuting expenses, and bikeshare membership as an eligible reimbursement.

[H.2036/S.1218](#) *An Act expanding access to commuter transit benefits offered by employers*

- This bill requires companies with more than 50 employees to offer pre-tax commuter benefits for transit and biking. In other states and municipalities where this has been implemented there has been a significant reduction in single occupancy vehicles and climate emissions. After San Francisco implemented a similar [program](#) in 2014, the Bay Area saw an estimated 44,400 employees switch from driving alone to an alternative commute mode and an estimated 35,778 tons of CO2 emissions were reduced over the first 12 months of program implementation.

[H.3523/S.2295](#) *An Act to reduce congestion and encourage shared rides*

- This bill increases per-ride fees on transportation network companies (TNCs) to put fees in line with other municipalities and states around the country. Revenues are dedicated to municipalities, the Commonwealth Transportation Fund, the MBTA, and RTAs. This bill also provides for additional data collection from TNCs to better understand and manage congestion. A similar version of this language passed the Legislature in the 2019-2020 session, but was vetoed by Governor Baker.

[H.3526](#) *An Act relative to low income transit fares*

- This bill directs the MBTA and RTAs to study and implement a low income fare structure. An identical version of the language passed the Legislature in the 2019-2020 session but was vetoed by Governor Baker. According to a [2019 MIT study](#), lowering fares on transit has shown to increase ridership outside of peak times.

[H.2494](#) *An Act establishing automated bus lane enforcement*

- This bill allows municipalities to implement automated camera enforcement for parking and driving in bus lanes. The [2021 transportation bond bill](#) included a provision to include bus lanes in enforcement of violations in the MBTA service area. Bus lanes only work if there is adequate enforcement and including this bill would provide equitable automated camera enforcement for parking or driving in bus lanes.

[H.2230/S.1447](#) *An Act to improve outdoor and indoor air quality for communities burdened by transportation pollution*

- This bill expands air quality monitoring, sets air quality targets, and requires air quality improvement measures in buildings facing the greatest burden from transportation pollution. A version of this bill was adopted to [S.2819 An act driving climate policy forward](#).

[H.3413/S.2277](#) *An Act to increase regional transit accessibility in the Commonwealth*

- This bill provides for Regional Transit Advancement through a designated funding source for RTAs, expansion of the RTA Council and its responsibilities, enhancement of support for RTA capital projects, and support for electrification of RTA buses.

H.3347/S.2151 *An Act promoting zero-emission vehicles*

- This bill establishes a low-and-moderate income electric vehicle rebate program for new and used electric vehicles, authorizes funding for the MOR-EV program, identifies priority locations for charging infrastructure, and requires utilities to submit proposals for time-of-use rates.

H.3262 *An Act relative to electric bicycles rebates*

- This bill establishes e-bike rebates through the MOR-EV program. Rebates of \$500 (and \$750 for low-income consumers) would be established to purchase new and used e-bikes with rebates capped at 40% of retail price.

H.3255/S.2139 *An Act to promote electric vehicle fleets by 2035*

- This bill sets target years for 50%, 75%, and 100% electrification of public vehicle fleets (transit, state, municipal) and private vehicle fleets that serve a public purpose (school bus fleets, vehicles leased by state or local agencies).

H.2355 *An Act to reduce atmospheric pollution*

- This bill would allow cities and towns to assess a surcharge on commercial parking to reduce pollution and GHG emissions from transportation.

Congestion Pricing and Other Strategies

As much as electrification of vehicle fleets is important for our long term climate goals, the average age of cars currently on the road is over 12 years. Electric vehicles are part of the solution but their high cost makes them inaccessible to most residents and will take years for the infrastructure to catch up to address range anxiety for most consumers.

We encourage the House to look at policies that will promote transportation alternatives and move away from our car centric culture. A [recent report from Lund University](#) examines the 12 most effective strategies for getting cars out of cities to reduce congestion and emissions from transportation.

The Commonwealth has an opportunity to establish a roadway and congestion pricing commission to study and analyze congestion pricing scenarios for the Greater Boston area through a climate and equity lens. Stockholm implemented congestion pricing in 2007 and [saw double digit drops in GHG emissions](#) and [pollution from transportation](#) to improve public health.

In July of 2021 the City of Portland, OR released a [regional congestion pricing study](#) to address congestion, climate change, pollution and equity in their transportation system. The study examined roadway pricing, tolling, parking costs, safety, and the impacts on the

region. The legislature passed language in the 2021 transportation bond bill establishing a [congestion pricing commission](#) that was subsequently vetoed by the Governor.

We hope that you will consider and incorporate these policies as part of House climate legislation this session. By providing the right incentives to promote mode shift away from SOVs, promote EV adoption to ensure wider availability across all income levels, and electrifying our public transportation systems and private fleets, the Commonwealth can successfully reduce emissions from transportation to meet our climate goals.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you this session.

Sincerely,

Pete Wilson
Senior Advisor
Transportation for Massachusetts

CC: Speaker of the House Representative Ron Mariano
Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means