

February 28th, 2020

Dear Members of the Transportation & Climate Initiative Leadership Team:

On behalf of our cities and towns, we commend the Baker Administration for their leadership to advance the Transportation and Climate Initiative among Northeast and Mid-Atlantic jurisdictions. A successful cap-and-invest policy proposal is one of the most important components of the broader strategy we must pursue to reduce emissions from transportation and make progress toward our climate goals.

Transportation comprises about 40% of emissions in the Commonwealth and has steadily increased for the past several years. Our Global Warming Solutions Act requires Massachusetts to reduce emissions 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, and we are supportive of the momentum to go further and achieve net zero by 2050. While we have made progress reducing emissions in other sectors, transportation remains a challenge. Our roads are gripped by some of the worst congestion in the nation, and we will not make progress on this issue without investments in public transit and walking and biking infrastructure. At the same time we take these steps to reduce emissions, we must also recognize that climate change is here today. Our entire transportation system needs to be resilient to the effects of climate change that are already happening, including rising temperatures, increased flooding risks, and greater storm severity. The Commonwealth is well positioned for positive transformative change for our transportation system, and TCI will help us tackle our simultaneous climate and congestion crises head on.

Given the urgency of the climate crisis, we support advancing a number of strategies to reduce emissions from transportation and make it easier for our residents to travel without a vehicle, including increasing public and private vehicle electrification; transformational investments to our commuter rail system as recommended by the Rail Visioning Committee to the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board; improving access to jobs, education, and services; expanding the proportion of homes with excellent access to transit; and improving our streets so that they function as shared spaces for pedestrians and cyclists. Our municipalities are working on a number of these efforts to reduce emissions, and many of us are already taking advantage of the Complete Streets program, electrifying our municipal fleets and more. With a robust TCI program, we will be able to continue this work and further reduce the carbon impact of our transportation system. We hope the TCI jurisdictions will retain enough flexibility in the program design to allow for investments for these and other related solutions that make sense for urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Again, we thank you for your work on this important initiative. We are eager to be partners with you all as the TCI policy design continues to take shape, and as the Commonwealth works toward carbon neutrality across all sectors.

Sincerely,

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