

# STATEMENT OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN SUPPORT OF A WORLD-CLASS PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM

## *The Challenge*

The winter of 2015 highlighted the Commonwealth's transportation vulnerabilities, particularly for the MBTA. While school and business cancellations, a dramatic drop in retail sales, and an increase in public safety risks result from many major winter storms, the complete shutdown of the MBTA followed by a prolonged reduction in services for the subways and commuter rails are not the norm.

The unreliability of our public transit system caused many businesses to lose substantial revenues from the loss of productivity due to delays and/or the inability of workers to get to work. Many hourly workers forfeited wages; many retailers forfeited sales; many restaurants forfeited patrons; and the Commonwealth forfeited the income, sales and meals tax associated therewith. A sub-optimal public transit system also caused roadways to be more congested than usual and commuting times to grow to unreasonable lengths for those who opted to drive or were transporting goods. The adverse financial impacts totaled in the billions of dollars. This is unacceptable and must not be repeated.

## *The Framework*

Due to the urgency of fixing the MBTA and the need for the public transit system to be reliable and fully functional, the undersigned business organizations are requesting policy makers to address the following issues:

- Make the T a customer-focused organization that provides first-rate service and clear communication while instilling confidence in its ridership.
- Provide greater accountability and transparency for the T's governance and management practices to ensure the entity is efficiently and effectively run while employing a productive workforce.
- Develop a long-term strategic and capital plan for the T that efficiently uses its resources to enhance the current capabilities and future needs of the T, businesses and workers, while providing sufficient funding to cover the costs.
- Overhaul the T's procurement and maintenance practices so that the system is safe, reliable and in a state of good repair.
- Establish metrics, milestones and regular reporting to ensure proper implementation of the T reforms within a reasonable period of time.
- Ensure that the T balances its operating budget without the need for ever-increasing state assistance each year.

## *The Solution*

The undersigned support this position and urge the Governor and the Legislature to act swiftly so we can begin the arduous task of fixing the state's public transit system.

Following a thorough analysis of the various recommendations from the Governor's Special Panel to Review the MBTA, and measured against the principles outlined above, we endorse the Panel's proposal and urge the Legislature to adopt the plan immediately.

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495/MetroWest Partnership

Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield

American Council of Engineering Companies of Massachusetts

Associated Industries of Massachusetts

Associated Subcontractors of Massachusetts

Construction Industries of Massachusetts

Environmental Business Council

Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce

Greater Boston Real Estate Board

Massachusetts Biotechnology Council

Massachusetts Chemistry & Technology Alliance

Massachusetts High Tech Council

Massachusetts Lodging Association

Massachusetts Petroleum Council

Massachusetts Restaurant Association

Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation

Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council

Massachusetts Business Roundtable

Metro South Chamber of Commerce

NAIOP Massachusetts, The Commercial Real Estate Development Association

National Federation of Independent Businesses

Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce

North Shore Chamber of Commerce

Retailers Association of Massachusetts

South Shore Chamber of Commerce

*April 29, 2015*