

# **BROAD-BASED COALITION FORMS TO FIGHT FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND DEFEAT QUESTION 1**

## *Committee for Safer Roads and Bridges Says Yesterday's I-495 Bridge Incident is Evidence of Why Ballot Question Puts Public at Further Risk*

The Committee for Safer Roads and Bridges, a coalition of consumer groups, business leaders, and public health officials, today launched a statewide effort to defeat Question 1, the ballot initiative that would put a billion dollars of repair funds at risk by eliminating gas tax indexing.

"Yesterday's incident on Interstate 495 in Chelmsford is a warning to all of us that continued neglect for state's crumbling road and bridges poses a potentially serious threat to our residents," said Mary Maguire, legislative and public affairs director for AAA, the road service and safety organization.. "This bridge was one of the more than half in our state that are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. We cannot afford to keep taking chances with this infrastructure."

According to the Federal Highway Administration, Massachusetts's infrastructure ranks second worst among the 50 states for structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges. Already, twenty seven bridges have been closed because they are unsafe and another 447 are under traffic load restrictions. Roadways conditions play a significant role in one-third of all traffic fatalities in Massachusetts and motor vehicle crashes cost Massachusetts \$6.3 billion a year in medical and other costs.

"We already know what happens when we don't index the gas tax to inflation: our roads and bridges fall into disrepair, which creates a public safety hazard and it undermines our state economy," said Somerville Mayor Joe Curtatone, a member of the group's executive committee. "Dependable, safe transportation is essential for the free flow of commerce and in making sure people can get to their jobs. It is basic common sense and responsibility that we should make sure we have the funds in place long-term to maintain Massachusetts' transportation network."

Curtatone is one many elected officials supporting the vote no campaign, including Republican Mayor Kevin J. Dumas of Attleboro.

"This is not a partisan issue, it is a public safety issue," said Dumas. "Republicans and Democrats care equally about being protected from dangerous roads and bridges."

The campaign has already recruited organizations and individuals from across the political spectrum, including the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, the Massachusetts Public Health Association, the Environmental League of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership.

Massachusetts Competitive Partnership President and CEO Dan O'Connell noted that since his group is dedicated to making Massachusetts competitive, "we know our state needs a safe and high quality transportation infrastructure to attract companies and workers. That's why business groups across the state are against Question 1."

For more information about the Committee for Safe Roads and Bridges, please visit us at [www.  
http://saferoadsbridges.com](http://saferoadsbridges.com).