walkBoston

March 17, 2009

Chairman Steven Baddour
Chairman Joseph Wagner
JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Room 208
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Room 134
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Baddour and Chairman Wagner:

WalkBoston is the Commonwealth's leading advocate for pedestrians and safe walking. We work throughout the state – encouraging walking, supporting pedestrian improvements and sponsoring walks. We have extensive experience in helping residents and local governments with pedestrian issues, safe routes to schools, and safer street crossings and sidewalks.

We write to express our strong support for the overall ideas expressed in the Governor's proposed Act to Reform, Rebuild And Renew The Transportation System. We believe that the combination of agency reforms and new tax revenue is the only way to solve Massachusetts' pressing transportation finance problems. We are very pleased to see the provisions for MBTA and RTA support that are so critical to providing mobility for ALL residents of the Commonwealth, including the more than 12 percent of households statewide that do not own a car (more than 20% in many of Massachusetts' cities).

We particularly support the robust attention to walking that is included in the Governor's proposal. The Healthy Transportation Compact calls for:

- Construction of "complete streets" to enable pedestrians, bicyclists and bus riders to move safely on roadways in urban and suburban areas.
- Increased bicycle and pedestrian travel throughout the Commonwealth
- Expanded Safe Routes to School opportunities

Each of these measures will provide increased safety and mobility across the state, where walking is a component of everyday transportation for most of our citizens.

We have one specific objection to both the Governor's proposal and the Senate proposal (An Act Modernizing the Transportation Systems of the Commonwealth) regarding the proposed transfer of DCR bridges and/or parkways to MassHighway. The DCR bridges and parkways are integral elements of the pedestrian network in many locations around the Commonwealth. DCR's commitment to their management and maintenance as pedestrian and bicycle as well as vehicular facilities is absolutely critical to their multi-modal nature, and transfer of these

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facilities to MassHighway would harm this function. For example, DCR is committed to sidewalk snow clearance on its bridges and along its parkways, while MassHighway specifically states that it does not clear sidewalks – a policy that poses a serious impediment to mobility in the many locations where local municipalities do not clear the sidewalks. We strongly believe that DCR's transportation facilities should continue to be owned, operated and maintained by DCR.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these vital transportation proposals. We would be pleased to provide you with further information and comment at your request.

Sincerely,

Wendy Landman
WalkBoston

Cc EOT Secretary James Aloisi
EOT Undersecretary Jeffrey Mullan

Sincerely,

Wendy Landman
Executive Director