

GOVERNOR PATRICK SIGNS BILL TO DRAMATICALLY REFORM TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

New law will put an end to big dig culture, abolish the turnpike and help secure the commonwealth's economic future

SPRINGFIELD - Friday, June 26, 2009 - Governor Deval Patrick today signed a landmark transportation reform bill to help secure the Commonwealth's economic future by radically simplifying bureaucracy and delivering real cost savings by curbing out-of-scale health and pension benefits.

"The meaningful, long-lasting reforms we will make to our state's transportation system will rebuild public trust and put an end to the old ways of doing business," said Governor Patrick, who signed the legislation at his Western Massachusetts Office in Springfield. "Today, we are inaugurating a new era of streamlined and efficient delivery of transportation services to the residents of Massachusetts."

Under the leadership of House Speaker Robert DeLeo and Senate President Therese Murray, three major pieces of reform legislation have reached the Governor's desk in the past two weeks. The bills include pension reform that eliminates the most egregious abuses and special perks from the state's pension system, transportation reform that abolishes the Turnpike Authority and streamlined our transportation system to save millions, and the most sweeping ethics, lobbying, and campaign finance reforms in decades.

"This law eliminates the antiquated and inefficient transportation structure in Massachusetts and brings considerable cost savings," House Speaker Robert DeLeo said. "Without the cooperation between House, Senate and Administration, we would not have been able to achieve unprecedented, historic progress on pension, transportation and ethics reform."

"Seven months ago the Senate called for reform before revenue in our transportation system, and today thanks to the cooperation and hard work of the Legislature and the Administration we have achieved our goal," Senate President Therese Murray said. "The restructuring of our cumbersome and inefficient transportation system is a landmark achievement that will dramatically improve the way we deliver transportation services while saving billions of dollars for the Commonwealth. This work, along with comprehensive reforms in our pension system and ethics and campaign finance laws, represents our collective commitment to honoring the public's demands for real change and restoring public trust."

When combined with a new source of dedicated revenue, the new transportation law will be a first step toward putting an end to decades of neglect and inaction by building a unified transportation organization that can support economic growth by fixing broken roads and bridges, investing in regional equity and strengthening public transit.

That bill will help put an end to the Big Dig culture of deception, patronage and waste by eliminating the Turnpike Authority, streamlining numerous overlapping transportation agencies, ending unreasonable perks at the MBTA, and saving the Commonwealth tens of millions of dollars each year.

The legislation creates a new Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT) to oversee four divisions: Highway, Mass Transit, Aeronautics and RMV. Mass DOT will be administered by a Secretary of Transportation, and overseen by a Board of Directors appointed by the Governor with expertise in transportation, finance and engineering.

"I am excited by this opportunity to lead a revitalized and reorganized transportation organization," said Transportation Secretary James Aloisi, Jr. "We will fulfill the Governor's strong mandate to simplify, reform and make more accountable our entire transportation system."

"The signing of this bill is a real testament to what can be accomplished when the legislature and the governor work together toward a common goal. This bill marks a milestone in government reform," said state Senator Steven A. Baddour, Senate Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation. "The bill eliminates the Turnpike Authority and creates a single, unified and sustainable transportation system that will save the taxpayers of the Commonwealth billions over decades. I am pleased to have been a part of this effort."

"This reform is nothing short of historic. It will modernize the state's transportation agencies, as well as create operational efficiencies and cost savings," said Joseph F. Wagner, House Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation. "This legislation will benefit every citizen of the Commonwealth."

The Commonwealth's transportation system faces an estimated \$15 to \$19 billion funding gap in the next 20 years to maintain the current network of roads, bridges and transit for safe, reliable service. A 2007 report issued by the Transportation Finance Commission stated: "The cost of this neglect will be felt in our regional economy and in our way of life. ... Business as usual will not suffice."

Crushing debt and substandard management from the Big Dig has siphoned much-needed dollars away from maintenance and operations, and fed a culture of out-of-scale benefits, inefficiencies and a lack of accountability.

Under Governor Patrick's leadership, the transportation agencies and authorities have generated tens of millions of dollars in savings and efficiencies through transportation reform efforts, while working on a long-term reform plan.

Learn more about the Governor's reform agenda at www.mass.gov/governor/reform