

# **04.17.08 - Transportation Bond Bill Signing and MassHighway Reforms**

**Governor Deval L. Patrick**

## **Transportation Bond Bill Signing Remarks**

**April 17, 2008**

### **As Delivered**

Massachusetts is weathering the national economic storm better than most. Not because we're standing still, but we've been working to grow jobs and to create opportunities and have strong results to show for our efforts in signature industries like the life sciences, clean energy sector.

I have confidence in the Commonwealth, and my confidence depends on continuing to make targeted investments that stimulate the economy today and ensure long-term growth and prosperity.

This Transportation bond bill is one piece of a massive revitalization of our Commonwealth, an investment in the things that will help keep us strong in the wake of national economic turmoil, and set the stage for our continued success. These investments are accompanied by reforms in how we manage and deliver transportation projects.

I want to thank the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, Chairman Baddour and Chairman Wagner, who could not be here, Chairman Montigny and Dean Flynn, Dean Flynn could not be here, for working with us to address our transportation infrastructure in comprehensive ways. Many of the projects outlined here are investments that communities have been waiting on for a very, very long time. Thanks to all of you, we can get to work now.

All told, the \$1.6 billion invested here to rebuild roads and bridges allows us to leverage \$1.8 billion in federal funds, generating \$3.5 billion in all for much needed maintenance and improvement.

The bill includes \$150 million for Chapter 90 grants to cities and towns to fund important road and bridge improvement projects in every corner of the Commonwealth. I see our friends from MMA nodding, appreciatively I hope.

The bill also continues our commitment to projects like the South Coast Rail Extension to Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford, as well as the Green Line extension to Somerville and Medford.

The legislation contains important reforms as well. Reforms in how we streamline projects, and how we

use police details, and in how we align the benefit systems of all our transportation agencies. A special thanks to the Senate President for taking the lead to bring these reforms forward.

Today in Massachusetts, projects take too long to complete and that results in inflation-related overruns that can add millions to the final price tag. Right now the typical project, the typical road project, takes ten years to move from concept, through design, to completion. The reforms we're announcing today will allow us to cut that timeline almost in half, to just under 6 years. You can see that illustrated on these graphs back over here, which we'll show you in a minute.

This ten year timeline costs Massachusetts millions of dollars every year. Under the ten year timeline, a typical \$5 million project often escalates to \$9.5 million before it's over. By cutting the time-line down, as we propose to do here, we can cut the final costs by \$2.2 million on that prototypical project - a reduction of 44%. That's real savings, savings that can be plowed right back into rebuilding and repairing our transportation infrastructure.

Secretary Cohen, Commissioner Paiewonsky and the team at MassHighway have a plan to cut consultant selection processes by almost a year, shorten project development steps by nearly half, streamline bidding periods, and accelerate the construction phase of all projects. We can do this without sacrificing community input or by compromising the environmental review process.

Our commitment to a streamlined process comes with an equally important need to keep the public clearly informed on our progress. That is why I'm proud to announce today the creation of the MassHighway Scorecard, which is, I guess, demonstrated, mocked up over here. The Scorecard offers quarterly reports on our work, measuring conditions of roads, bridges and rails; safety throughout the system; mobility reports on congestion and commute lines; and on-time and on-budget management of construction projects

The Scorecard is available for the first time today online at [www.mass.gov/eot/scorecard](http://www.mass.gov/eot/scorecard). We look forward to working with the Senate President, with the Speaker, as well as with the business community, local residents and all stakeholders to develop for every region of the state a well-maintained, well-planned system of roads, bridges and public transportation that meets the needs of our economy, our communities and our environment.