

GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES TRANSPORTATION REFORM, SIGNS COMPREHENSIVE \$3.5 BILLION BOND BILL

Administration to Make Transportation Reforms Creating Opportunity and Restoring Trust

BOSTON - Thursday, April 17, 2008 - Governor Deval Patrick today signed the \$3.5 billion transportation bond bill to invest in road and bridge projects across the Commonwealth over three years, while announcing MassHighway's innovative plan to complete projects at least 40% faster, saving millions of dollars in inflation costs.

"These long-term investments will help address decades of neglect in infrastructure by rebuilding roads and bridges, while creating thousands of jobs in every corner of the Commonwealth," says Governor Patrick. "Along with the streamlining reforms announced today, we want to rebuild the public's confidence in government's ability to deliver projects in a safe and timely manner."

The MassHighway streamlining plan will include cutting red tape, working longer hours, using technology to save time and implementing incentives and penalties to keep projects on budget and on time. The plan also increases transparency to the public through a new web-based "Scorecard" with information on project delivery, road and bridge conditions, travel safety and mobility.

Portions of the transportation bond bill will take effect immediately, infusing federal matching transportation dollars along with state Chapter 90 transportation funds to communities across the Commonwealth. These investments will also help create new jobs, as the Administration works to foster economic growth amid a softening national economy.

"With this transportation bond bill, the Legislature and Governor Patrick are taking several bold steps to improve the Commonwealth's transportation infrastructure," said House Speaker Salvatore F. DiMasi. "These meaningful investments will go a long way toward fixing our ailing roads and bridges while the reforms make clear our commitment to cutting costs and increasing efficiencies in the system."

"Safe roads, highways, bridges and rails are essential to all citizens and to the economic growth of our Commonwealth," said Senate President Therese Murray. "I am proud that we worked together to get this bill done in time for the construction season and with important reforms that are critical first-steps in handling our transportation funding gap and changing how the state's transportation agencies do business. I see this legislation as part of some very important and comprehensive proposals we have made for the future of the Commonwealth in energy, health care and life sciences."

Transportation Bond Bill Investment

The \$3.5 billion bill includes \$2.4 billion in federal matching dollars for rebuilding roads and bridges over a three-year period. Other funding highlights include:

- \$700 million for State Improvement Plan commitments to increase transit access across eastern Massachusetts. This includes funding for the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line through Boston, Green Line extension to Somerville and Medford, design and engineering for a Red Line-Blue Line connector between the Government Center and Charles, MGH Stations, and creation of 1,000 commuter parking spaces to ease use of mass transit.
- Maintaining last year's increase to \$150 million per year to fund Chapter 90 transportation grants to cities and towns, which will fully fund those improvements and provide an immediate positive impact on main streets and other local roads.
- \$10 million for mass transit planning projects that support economic growth and promote geographic equity, including planning efforts for the South Coast Rail extension to Fall river and New Bedford, the Urban Ring project, and the Blue Line extension to Lynn.
- \$8 million, matched with \$8 million in federal funds, for the initial improvements to the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line, delivering shorter trip times.

The bond bill also includes many transportation reform provisions:

- Requires calculation of life-cycle costs along with design/construction costs in project planning.
- Establishes a deferred maintenance trust fund for maintenance and repair.
- Directs MTA and MBTA to align retiree health insurance benefits with those of Commonwealth employees for those under age 65 retiring after 2008. Currently, MBTA retirees pay 0% of insurance premiums and MTA retirees pay 5% in some cases. Certain MBTA retiree health insurance changes would take effect after expiration of the pending collective bargaining agreement in 2010, which is currently in arbitration.
- Requires MBTA to compare costs of its current retirement plan to the cost of a plan that requires 25 years of service and minimum age of 55 to retire. Currently, MBTA employees may retire following 23 years of service with no minimum age.
- Requires the Executive Office of Transportation and the Executive Office of Public Safety to issue regulations on the use of police details on public-works projects and to submit reports on the costs of police details on state-funded projects during the preceding 5 years.
- Requires MTA to submit reports on cost savings and the feasibility of converting 90% of cash toll lanes to FastLanes and to inventory all MTA assets.

MassHighway Streamlining, Scorecard Reforms

The Executive Office of Transportation and MassHighway leadership scoured each step of the road and bridge construction process from start to finish -beginning at the moment an infrastructure need is identified through the final completion and opening of a project.

MassHighway has made a commitment to streamline project completion times so that they are cut by at least 40%. For example, a typical MassHighway 10-year highway reconstruction project would be dramatically reduced to 5.8 years, saving millions of dollars.

With a streamlined process also comes the need to keep the public clearly informed about the measures of success. A new MassHighway Scorecard online for the first time today will offer quarterly reports on progress in delivering quality projects and safe, convenient roads. Scorecards will measure:

- Conditions: roads, bridges, and pavement
- Safety: accident information
- Mobility: congestion, commute times
- Efficiency: up-to-date timelines on construction projects.

Transportation Secretary Bernard Cohen said the Governor's transportation reform project is moving forward on many fronts.

"MassHighway streamlining and transparency reforms build on recent reform announcements, including the Governor's Accelerated Bridge Repair program and the pilot program to sell FastLane transponders and MBTA CharlieCards in motor vehicle Registry branches," said Secretary Cohen. "These reforms stress efficient delivery of services in a collaborative approach that is literally changing the way we do business in delivering transportation services."

"I applaud the Governor for signing this legislation, which represents a great deal of work and collaboration between everyone involved," said Senator Steven Baddour, Senate Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation. "Beyond the much needed infrastructure improvements and maintenance this bill sets forth, the reforms it presents through the streamlining and expediting of projects means a great deal of cost savings for taxpayers during these tough financial times."

"This bond bill will serve as a statewide economic stimulus measure, putting people to work and providing important upgrades to the Commonwealth's transportation infrastructure," said Representative Joseph F. Wagner, House Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation.