

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

House of Representatives

State House, Boston 02133-1054

Sept. 6, 2016

Stephanie Pollack, Secretary
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Secretary Pollack,

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the proposed plan to transition to All-Electronic Tolling (AET) along the Massachusetts Turnpike. As you know, our delegation and those we represent have long been concerned with the inequity of the current tolling, which is limited only to Mass Pike travel. Given the direct impact that the proposed plan has on our region, we are writing to make you aware of our concerns with the current proposal and engage your assistance in addressing these concerns.

Specifically, we wish to highlight the following:

Commuters with transponders exiting at Weston (exit 15) Rte. 128/I-95 will see per-trip toll increases of 7 to 50 percent. These proposed increases, which will impact MetroWest and Central MA commuters traveling to areas north and/or south of Boston, will further exacerbate an already inequitable situation. Given that the proposed plan is revenue neutral, we believe that no toll payer should be subject to a toll increase as a result of the AET transition.

Residents without transponders will see steep increases in toll levels across the board. We understand that toll collection for travelers without transponders requires additional resources for processing and acknowledge this added administration may merit a surcharge above the toll charged via transponder. We also believe it is your goal to move as many travelers as possible to using transponders. However, we strongly believe that the actual cost of processing non-transponder transactions should be detailed and transparent and any additional fees/charges should not be excessive. Please provide more detail on both the costs of processing non-transponder transactions and the cost basis for the proposed increases.

More transparency is needed relative to calculation of the proposed new toll rates and the distribution of future funds for operations on the Western Turnpike. As you know, in 2013 the legislature passed a transportation finance law aimed in part at increasing equity for Massachusetts toll-paying residents along the Western Turnpike by putting investment benchmarks in place. Relative to this, we ask that MassDOT provide more background on the

calculations behind this new toll structure, and specifically why changes to toll rates are proposed even though the proposal is designed to be revenue neutral. We also request that you provide information on how future funds under the proposed plan will be allocated by region compared with how they are allocated today, specifically with respect to the Western Turnpike.

We request support from the administration in seeking federal approval for a tolling pilot program for other major state roadways. Toll equity for the MetroWest and Central MA continues to be a major concern for us and our region. Obtaining federal authorization to expand tolling to other major roadways on a pilot basis would be a significant step toward remedying the current inequities. We will be in contact with your office to schedule a meeting to discuss the process for initiating this federal request.

Thank you for your consideration of these regional concerns and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Carolyn C. Dykema
State Representative
8th Middlesex District



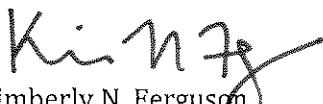
Hannah E. Kane
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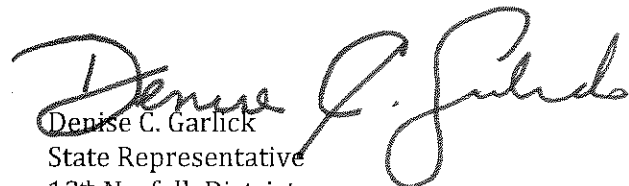
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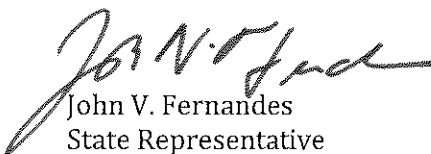
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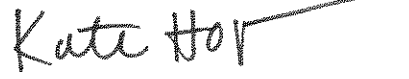
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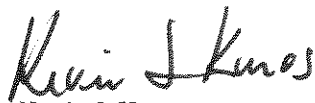
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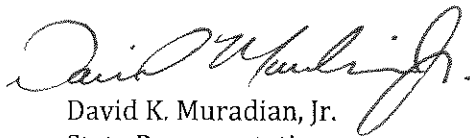
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