

May 8, 2025

Senator Karen Spilka, President  
Massachusetts Senate  
State House, Room 332  
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Michael Rodrigues, Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 212  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senate President Spilka and Chair Rodrigues,

On behalf of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and our 1,200 members, I write to offer comments on S.2512, *An Act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2025 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects*. We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on several important investments in our transportation infrastructure included in this legislation.

As you proceed toward debating S.2512 that appropriates over \$1.3 billion in critical income surtax resources, the Chamber is disappointed that public transit, and particularly the MBTA, will not receive the necessary resources to stabilize short-term finances. As a member of the Governor's Transportation Financing Task Force, the Chamber participated in detailed discussions on shoring up our public transportation finances, resulting in the Governor's spending plan that heavily relied on income surtax support. Unlike the Governor and the House, unfortunately, S.2512 falls short of the mark of providing the necessary, multi-year fiscal foundation for ongoing safety, reliability, and service improvements. We urge the Senate to reprioritize public transit and dedicate additional resources to this critical need that provides statewide benefits.

**MBTA Deficiency Fund Transfer (Item 1595-2508 - \$200 million)**

As you know, last year the Governor convened an array of stakeholders by forming the Transportation Funding Task Force to discuss short, medium, and long-term financing mechanisms to provide safe and reliable transportation options across the Commonwealth. The Chamber participated in these conversations throughout 2024 – which resulted in the Governor's proposal to invest up to \$8 billion in our transportation infrastructure statewide utilizing surtax funding, borrowing, and general funds. Spread across H.55/S.2512, the FY26 budget, and Chapter 90 legislation, these investments will benefit our transportation infrastructure in all regions of the Commonwealth.

While the Chamber supports a regionally equitable approach to these investments, we take this opportunity to highlight the need for fiscal stability for the MBTA, a critical service that underpins the Greater Boston economy and therefore provides statewide benefits. Under the leadership of General Manager Phillip Eng, the MBTA has made strong progress on implementing safety and reliability improvements along with necessary track and signal work to eliminate slow zones and improve the rider experience. While the progress of deploying capital investment and service improvements is ongoing and there is much more work to be done, the Chamber believes the MBTA is heading in the right direction, and the additional financial support will provide meaningful support to the ongoing turnaround necessary at the agency to build trust with current and future riders.

Facing an immediate budget cliff, this line-item combined with FY26 appropriations will help the MBTA address short-term funding challenges while it continues to improve safety and reliability – but falls short of the resources identified by the Governor and the House as essential for budget stability for roughly 3 fiscal years. Even the significant resources proposed by the Governor are below the MBTA's actual need, making further decreases unmanageable and places recent momentum to improve the T in real jeopardy. We hope you will consider increasing the line-item through debate or conference negotiations to ensure safety and reliability at the MBTA.

**MBTA Workforce/Safety Reserve (Item 1596-2427 - \$400 million)**

The transfer of \$400 million in surtax revenue to the MBTA Workforce and Safety reserve would ensure the MBTA has the resources necessary to address specific safety and workforce shortfalls identified by the Federal Transit Administration. While the MBTA makes progress on capital improvements, safety and reliability issues remain, and ensuring an adequate workforce to support the transportation system will assist the agency in maintaining safe oversight and operation of transit services. Unfortunately, these critical resources were removed from S.2512, a major loss for the boosting workforce and safety support at the MBTA. We urge the Senate to reconsider.

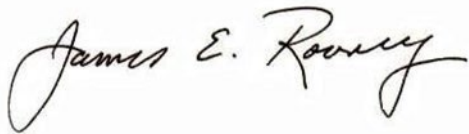
**Supporting the goal of 50/50 surtax split for Education and Transportation**

The Chamber would like to note that we support the goal of allocating roughly 50/50 of income surtax resources for education and transportation initiatives, split roughly equally over long-term spending trends. In this spirit, however, we highlight that in aggregate, legislators have favored education spending over transportation spending in the first years of available surtax revenue. For example, the final FY25 budget dedicated almost 59% of surtax funding (\$762 million) to education initiatives, while transportation received just over 41% of surtax dollars (\$539 million). The Senate's proposed FY26 budget released this week allocates 58% of surtax revenue to education and 42% to transportation.

The Governor's and House's approaches to transportation spending in H.55 and H.4010, if enacted, would lead to a rebalancing of levels of education and transportation spending of surtax revenues overall, rather than simply favoring transportation in one legislative vehicle. We urge the Senate to achieve its stated goal of a 50/50 split of surtax revenue by viewing its approach holistically and acknowledge previous appropriation levels to ensure that, over the long-term, resources are equitably distributed among two important public policy priorities.

Thank you for your attention and please reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



James E. Rooney  
President & CEO