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Governor
Deval Patrick in Governor's Office

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GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC SECURITY PLAN**Plan Reforms Big-Dig Culture, Rebuilds Trust and Transparency to Help Secure the Commonwealth's Economic Future**

BOSTON - Friday, February 20, 2009 - Governor Deval Patrick today announced his vision for a comprehensive reform plan to radically simplify the Commonwealth's transportation system, while addressing serious fiscal challenges stemming from decades of neglect and inaction, and a failed bureaucracy under the "Big Dig" culture.

Governor Patrick's Transportation and Economic Security Plan incorporates recommendations from the [Transportation Finance Commission Report](#) that uncovered decades of inaction and neglect under previous administrations. After receiving this report in 2007, Governor Patrick started to develop a plan to secure the Commonwealth's economic future and maintain safety of the state's roads and bridges.

The Transportation and Economic Security Plan, which builds on innovative reforms proposed by Senate President Therese Murray, follows an aggressive two-year reform effort led by the Patrick Administration that has saved taxpayers \$83 million in savings and efficiencies throughout the transportation bureaucracy.

"The days of irresponsibility, of avoiding the truth and the consequences, must end and end now. We are all out of time. Now is the time to reform, rebuild and renew our system from top to bottom," said Governor Patrick. "The good news is that right now, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to coordinate federal stimulus funds, state capital money, our accelerated bridge program, and the reforms in the Transportation and Economic Security Plan to make our roads and bridges safer, grow jobs, and build a strong economic future."

Reforming the Big Dig Culture

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 more than \$83 million in savings and efficiencies through transportation reform efforts, while working on a long-term reform plan. Those reforms include:

- Joining 49 other states in using civilian flaggers on construction projects
- Streamlining project delivery time at MassHighway by 40%
- Saving \$47 million at the MBTA by reducing overtime costs and staff levels and increasing employee health care contributions.
- Saving \$31 million at the Turnpike by eliminating middle management and toll takers
- With the legislature's support, launching the Accelerated Bridge Repair Program to address the backlog of maintenance projects left by previous administrations

[Patrick Reform Plan: A Unified Transportation Agency](#)

In spite of these efforts, it is necessary to implement reforms that radically simplify the current system to build a modern transportation network that is adequately funded and professionally managed to help secure our economic future.

Governor Patrick and his transportation team, led by Transportation Secretary James A. Aloisi Jr., have put forward a comprehensive reorganization plan that builds a unified and transparent transportation system through the following reforms:

- Creates a consolidated Executive Office of Transportation with four Divisions: Highway, Rail & Transit, Aviation & Port, and Registry of Motor Vehicles
- Abolishes the Turnpike Authority and create one highway, tunnel, and bridge system
- Consolidates state aviation assets
- Creates an Office of Performance Management to ensure public accountability and transparency
- Enacts all Transportation Finance Commission Reform (TFC) Recommendations, including creation of a Private Project Ombudsman to streamline project development, which could save \$2.5 billion over 20 years

Renewing Investments to Secure Economic Future

In addition to simplifying the system, the Commonwealth must address significant long-term financial challenges throughout its transportation agencies and authorities. The Transportation and Economic Security Plan will help pay down debt and make sound, sustainable investments to fix crumbling roads and bridges and secure the state's economic future. The plan includes the following reforms:

- Restructuring and simplifying our transportation bureaucracy, including abolishing the Turnpike Authority
- Ending the "23 and out" special perk in the MBTA pension system
- Bringing the Turnpike and MBTA employees into the state health care system
- Increasing accountability and transparency throughout the transportation system
- Making our transportation system more environmentally-responsible
- Streamlining operations and eliminating 300 positions
- Working to move MassHighway personnel off the capital budget and back onto the regular payroll
- Increasing the state fuel tax to pay down debt and avoid toll and fare increases, while exploring innovative solutions to start phasing out the fuel tax, such as using a pilot GPS-based technology to collect fees electronically.

The plan proposes a fuel tax increase of 19 cents - approximately \$8 per month for most drivers. Future increases would follow the Consumer Price Index (an essential component that the state failed to do last time). The gas tax has not been increased since 1991. The Governor said he will not support an increase in the gas tax without several other restructurings and reforms outlined in his plan.

The plan is transparent and accountable on the new revenue from the gas tax, accounting for and dedicating each new penny to a specific transportation initiative:

- 4 cents to roll back the proposed toll increases on the Turnpike
- 6 cents to preserve current MBTA services and prevent a fare increase
- 1 cent for Innovative Gas and Toll Solutions
- 1.5 cents for Regional Transit Authorities
- 1.5 cents for targeted regional road projects
- 3 cents for rail projects outside of Boston
- 2 cents to address the costly practice of paying for personnel with bond funds

"Raising the gas tax is a last resort, and without it, our economy will suffer," said Governor Patrick. "Our long-term job growth and economic security, along with the safety of our roads and bridges, depends upon both major reforms and new revenue now."

"We must act immediately to free our transportation system from the stranglehold of debt so we can finally make the long-awaited investments necessary to improve service and reliability," said Secretary Aloisi. "Our goal is to build an open and accountable transportation agency for future generations that supports economic growth, regional equity and responsible environmental stewardship."

Creating a "Greener" Transportation System

The transportation sector is the largest and fastest-growing source of greenhouse gas emissions in the region. The Transportation and Economic Security Plan will make the state's transportation system more environmentally responsible through "Green" initiatives that encourage more fuel-efficient vehicles and "Buy and Build Green" provisions.

These initiatives will encourage environmentally responsible practices and give people the opportunity to drive less with increased access to transit, bicycling and walking:

- Unprecedented public transportation investments outside of Greater Boston
- Mandates Massport to participate in public transportation initiatives serving its facilities
- Authorizes a "green car" sliding scale for new automobile registration fees
- Adopts and implements "Buy Green" and "Build Green" provisions
- Authorizes "Complete Streets" Initiative to encourage bicycling and walking

Encouraging Civic Engagement

Keeping to Governor Patrick's commitment to transparency and encouraging civic engagement, additional information is posted online at the Executive Office of Transportation's You Move Massachusetts website at www.mass.gov/youmovemassachusetts.

The website will allow residents to download and view documents, submit comments and track progress of the reform plan through a new blog and updates from Secretary Aloisi and transportation officials.

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