FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
August 31, 2015

CONTACT
Elizabeth Guyton
elizabeth.guyton@state.ma.us

CONEG Takes Action On Opioid Abuse, National Surface Transportation Legislation, and Low Income Home Heating Assistance

Governors sign four letters to national leaders urging action on three critical fronts for Northeast States

ST. JOHN’S – Today, the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG), under the leadership of Chair Governor Dannel P. Malloy (CT) and Vice-chair Governor Charlie Baker (MA) took action on three fronts issuing letters regarding the opioid epidemic, national surface transportation legislation, and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

The six New England governors recommended to Dr. Stephen Ostroff, Acting Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that the FDA require labeling changes for Immediate Release opioid analgesics that effectively communicate to patients and prescribers the serious risks of addiction, overdose, neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), and death associated with the drugs. They also wrote to Canadian Health Minister Rona Ambrose urging accelerated action by the Ministry to align the regulatory approaches of the U.S. FDA and Health Canada on regulations for tamper resistant/abuse deterrent guidelines for controlled-release oxycodone products.

(Click here to read the full letter to the FDA and here for Health Canada)

On transportation issues, CONEG members also agreed on language urging Congress to act quickly to ensure continuity and stability of the nation’s highway, transit, rail and safety programs and the Highway Trust Fund.
In a letter to U.S. House and Senate authorization leaders regarding the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the six governors urged lawmakers to secure the maximum funding level for low-income families within the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill. CONEG members asked Congress to maintain the current language from the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015 so that states can efficiently assist low-income households with the delivery of essential home heating oil or restoration of vital gas or electric utility service as soon as winter weather arrives.

The Northeast Governors met Monday morning in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador where the members participated in the 39th annual Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP). The New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers are in Newfoundland to discuss issues of regional importance including energy, trade and transportation. Governors Malloy (CT), Hassan (NH), Baker (MA), Shumlin (VT), LePage (ME) and a representative from Rhode Island participated in today's CONEG meeting.

The Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) is an association that encourages intergovernmental cooperation in the Northeast through joint consideration of common issues relating to the economic, environmental and social well-being of the Northeast states. Members include Governor Dannel P. Malloy (CT & CONEG Chair), Governor Charlie Baker (MA & CONEG Vice-Chair), Governor Paul LePage (ME), Governor Maggie Hassan (NH), Governor Andrew Cuomo (NY), Governor Gina Raimondo (RI), and Governor Peter Shumlin (VT).

###