

October 27, 2021

Governor Charles D. Baker
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon St., Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Secretary Jamey Tesler
Department of Transportation
10 Park Plaza, Suite 4160
Boston, MA 02116

General Manager Poftak
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02110

*Via electronic submission: charlie.baker@state.ma.us, jamey.tesler@state.ma.us,
spoftak@mbta.com*

Subject: Accelerate electrification of the MBTA bus fleet

Dear Governor Baker, Secretary Tesler, and General Manager Poftak,

As legislators, elected and appointed municipal officials representing communities with a diverse resident population, we are writing to urge the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to commit to 100% electrification of its bus fleet by 2030 and an implementation plan that is centered in equity.

The MBTA operates one of the largest transit agencies in the country. It's fleet of primarily fossil fuel buses contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and toxic air pollution that disproportionately impacts environmental justice populations. The MBTA still hasn't made a public commitment to get to an all-electric bus fleet and plans to continue purchasing hundreds of fossil-fueled buses that would lock Boston area residents into a dirty transportation system for decades to come. In contrast, other large transit agencies in cities across the country- including Chicago, New York City, Los Angeles, Portland, Miami-Dade, San Francisco, Seattle, and most recently Houston- have made commitments to 100% zero-emission buses.

The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) makes it clear that to avoid the worst consequences of climate change that are already impacting our communities, urgent and bold action is needed now to cut emissions. The MBTA's current plan to transition to an all-electric fleet over two decades is inadequate and far too slow. [The new report](#) released by Sierra Club, TransitMatters, and the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy - alongside 14 supportive organizations- offers a plan that would transition

the MBTA to a fully electrified bus fleet over the next ten years. It shows that 100% electrification of the MBTA's buses would reduce the fleet's greenhouse gas emissions by 97%, save the MBTA more than \$175 million in lifetime operating costs, and save area residents approximately \$9 million annually in avoided healthcare costs.

We urge the MBTA to take concrete steps towards full bus fleet electrification by 2030 in a manner that guarantees that transit electrification will first benefit the Boston area communities most impacted by vehicle pollution by prioritizing garage upgrades and bus electrification for routes serving low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.

Specifically, we are calling on the MBTA to commit to the following:

- **Commit to full bus fleet electrification by 2030 and stop internal combustion engine bus purchases no later than 2023-** A gradual shift to electric buses and trolleys over the next ten years is well within the MBTA's reach. Publicly committing to electrifying the fleet by 2030 would provide clear objectives and timelines as the public works with the MBTA to achieve equitable and productive interim steps.
- **Release a 2030 fleetwide electrification plan that prioritizes environmental justice hotspots in its electrification planning -** The MBTA should release a detailed bus fleet electrification plan by June 2022 that includes a thorough network wide route analysis to identify electric bus technology options, battery specifications, and charging strategy. The plan should prioritize the deployment of zero-emission electric buses on routes that pass through low-income people and communities of color.
- **Create an effective charging strategy to expand and build a reliable electric bus network.** The MBTA should explore both in-route charging (IRC) and overnight garage charging for electric buses, and in-motion charging (IMC) for trolleys to provide added range resiliency and to ensure the smoothest possible transition to an electric fleet.
- **Accelerate bus facility modernization and replacement-** The MBTA should adopt an aggressive timeline for garage replacement by advancing the planning, design, and construction of multiple facilities simultaneously and identify MBTA and MassDOT properties that can be used as swing space as new facilities are built. All new garages starting with Quincy in 2024 must start housing an electric bus fleet from day one.

We urge the Commonwealth and the MBTA to commit to a bold bus fleet electrification plan that centers environmental justice communities, riders, and workers and that befits the urgency of the climate crisis.

Sincerely,

State Representatives and Senators

Steven C. Owens, Representative 29th Middlesex

Christine P Barber, Representative 34th Middlesex

Joan Meschino, Representative 3rd Plymouth

Michelle Ciccolo, Representative 15th Middlesex

Maria Robinson, Representative 6th Middlesex

Lindsay N. Sabadosa, Representative 1st Hampshire

Natalie Higgins, Representative 4th Worcester

Erika Uyterhoeven, Representative 27th Middlesex

Carol Doherty, Representative 3rd Bristol

Sally Kerans, Representative 13th Essex

Ruth B. Balsler, Representative 12th Middlesex

Bill Driscoll Jr., Representative 7th Norfolk

Kevin G. Honan, Representative 17th Suffolk

Mike Connolly, Representative 26th Middlesex

Paul Tucker, Representative 7th Essex

Tami Gouveia, Representative 14th Middlesex

Tram T. Nguyen, Representative 18th Essex

Peter Capano, Representative 11th Essex

Sean Garballey, Representative 23rd Middlesex

Tom Stanley, Representative 9th Middlesex and Waltham Councilor At-Large

Linda Dean Campbell, Representative 15th Essex

Kate Lipper-Garabedian, Representative 32nd Middlesex

Brendan P. Crighton, Senator 3rd Essex District

Joan Lovely, Senator 2nd Essex

Michael O. Moore, Senator 2nd Worcester

Jamie Eldridge, Senator Middlesex and Worcester

Sal DiDomenico, Senator Middlesex and Suffolk

Pat Jehlen, Senator 2nd Middlesex

Sonia Chang-Díaz, Senator 2nd Suffolk

Becca Rausch, Senator Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex

John F. Keenan, Senator Norfolk and Plymouth

Walter F. Timilty, Senator Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth

Marc Pacheco, Senator & Dean of the Senate, 1st Plymouth and Bristol District

Municipal Officials

Michelle Wu, Boston City Councilor At-Large

Anthony Rinaldi, Amesbury City Councilor and Chair of Energy Committee

Sumbul Siddiqui, Mayor, City of Cambridge

Quinton Zondervan, Cambridge City Councillor

Dennis Carlone, Cambridge City Councillor

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler, Cambridge City Councillor & Chair of the Council's Transportation Committee

Marc McGovern, Cambridge City Councillor

Patricia Nolan, Cambridge City Councillor

Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor of Newton

Alison Leary, Newton City Councilor At-Large Ward 1

Emily Norton, Newton City Councilor

Andreae Downs, Newton City Councilor At -Large, Ward 5

Deb Crossley, Newton City Councilor

Alicia Bowman, Newton City Councilor

Vicki Danberg, Newton City Councilor at Large, Ward 6

Maria S Greenberg, Newton City Councilor, Ward 1

Bill Humphrey, Newton City Councilor

Susan Albright, Newton City Councilor and President of City Council

Margareth Shepard, Framingham City Councilor

Christine Madore, Salem City Councilor, Ward 2

Patti Morsillo, Salem City Councilor

Steve Dibble, Salem City Councilor

Ben Ewen-Campen, Somerville City Councilor, Ward 3

Brian LaPierre, Lynn City Councilor At-Large

Samantha Perlman, Marlborough City Councilor

Jonathan Paz, Waltham City Councilor

Caroline Bays, Watertown Councilor At-Large

Tony Palomba, Watertown Councilor At-Large

Lisa Feltner, Watertown Town Councilor

Mark Sideris, Watertown Town Council President

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Watertown Town Council Vice President & District C Councilor

Anthony J. Donato, Watertown Town Councilor

John Gannon, Watertown Town Councilor At-Large

CC: MBTA Board of Directors