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Mass. High Tech. Council Testifies in Support of MBTA Reform Legislation
State's leading technology group highlights economic development impacts of transit system and calls on legislature to adopt systemic changes to MBTA.

The Massachusetts High Technology Council provided testimony today before the legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation, highlighting the economic development impacts of the transit system and expressing support for the systemic changes to the MBTA proposed in legislation filed by Governor Baker on April 22. (Read full text of testimony [here](#).)

The High Tech Council is one of 25 business organizations who recently issued a joint statement calling for significant and immediate reforms at the MBTA and Council executives joined several other business group leaders testifying at today's hearing.

Mark Gallagher, the Council's Executive Vice President for Public Policy told committee members "technology employers know that the ease and efficiency with which their employees can commute to work plays an important role in overall employee satisfaction, retention and productivity. **"When employees simply cannot get to work, as was often the case this winter, the economic impact can be devastating to companies and to the Commonwealth's business environment and "brand."**

Gallagher reinforced the critical role effective transportation systems play as states compete for economic activity and job growth. **"States that are able to provide a reliable and efficient public transportation system create for themselves a distinct competitive advantage," Gallagher said. "Those that cannot will suffer clear and significant negative impacts on their quality of life and ability to attract and retain employers and talented employees."**

Gallagher cited 2014 US Census reports that the average commute for Massachusetts workers is the 5th longest in the country at 28 minutes and more than 320,000 Massachusetts workers travel more than an hour each way to work. Gallagher noted commutes are even longer in Greater Boston, which has the nation's 6th highest concentration of "mega-commuters" defined as traveling more than 90 minutes each way.

Gallagher urged policymaker to prioritize transportation investments, but from existing resources first. Gallagher urged legislators to reject calls for any immediate infusion of new resources at the MBTA and **asserted that the "reform versus revenue" dilemma is a false dichotomy.** "Additional funding for transportation need not necessarily come from new taxes and additional revenues," Gallagher said. "To

the extent additional funding is needed, we urge policymakers to better allocate existing resources in a manner that reflects our shared recognition that transportation infrastructure must be among state government's highest priorities."

Gallagher insisted that the investment of any additional resources at the MBTA and other transportation infrastructure should and must be conditioned on the implementation of permanent structural and procurement reforms. **"There are significant unrealized opportunities to reduce costs by reforming the way Massachusetts purchases all of its transportation-related goods and services,"** said Gallagher, citing the MBTA Special Panel Report a 2014 study by the Reason Foundation ranking Massachusetts 46th in overall highway performance and cost effectiveness. "The Commonwealth spends \$675,000 per mile to maintain its highways, more than four times the national average of \$162,000."

About the Massachusetts High Technology Council – www.mhtc.org

The Massachusetts High Technology Council is the oldest and only cross-sector association of technology, professional services, and higher education CEOs and senior executives in Massachusetts. As advocates for public policies and programs that create and maintain a healthy and competitive business climate, the Council has lead winning strategies for 37 years. In addition to its mission focus on cost competitiveness and talent development, the Council also works to preserve and strengthen federal defense assets in Massachusetts and support a robust and productive interaction among those assets and the public and private technology sectors across New England.

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