

*For Immediate Release*

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**REP. FERRANTE, HOUSE PASS TRANSPORTATION REFORM BILL**  
**Changes Will Make Statewide Transportation System Less Costly and More Efficient**

**BOSTON**—State Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante (D-Gloucester) joined her colleagues in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in passing a sweeping transportation reform package that would eliminate the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, bring down insurance and pension costs and help ensure a better future.

These transportation reforms will create new pension rules for new MBTA workers, eliminating the “23 and out rule,” put existing and future workers under the auspices of the Group Insurance Commission (GIC), which will lower healthcare costs and create a more efficient structure.

“Today, we have taken a significant step toward streamlining government, making our transportation system more efficient,” said Ferrante. “The consolidation of departments, elimination of the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, and reductions in insurance and pension costs, will result in overall savings to our Commonwealth and taxpayers.”

Through the work of Rep. Ferrante and other Members of the House, this package focuses on efficiencies, cost-savings and oversight.

“This transportation vote represents a step forward for reform. The vote to place all MBTA workers in the GIC as well as other major changes offers the prospect of considerable cost savings. I look forward to working with the Governor, Senate President and Rep. Ferrante on finalizing the reform of our transportation system and continuing our important work,” said House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo (D-Winthrop). “I thank Rep. Ferrante for taking this step toward change and reform.”

“The House passed measure is historic in nature, creating structural reforms that will result in system-wide efficiencies and improved transportation service delivery,” said Rep. Joseph Wagner (D-Chicopee), the co-chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation.

A few highlights of the transportation reform package include:

*A More Efficient Structure*

- The bill establishes the independent Massachusetts Transportation and Infrastructure Authority.
- The bill eliminates the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority.
- The Authority will be governed by a 5-member board chaired by the Governor.

- A Secretary will be appointed by the Governor and be responsible to both the Governor and the board.
- Under the Authority, there will be a Department of Transportation responsible for the following divisions: Aeronautics, Massachusetts Highways, Mass Transit, Registry of Motor Vehicles and Constituent and Municipal Services.
- The Authority will receive an annual appropriation from the Legislature.
- The Authority will maintain a separate fund, consisting of dedicated revenue streams, including turnpike, tunnel and Tobin Bridge tolls to satisfy bond obligations.

### *Reform*

- The existing “23 and out” pension rule for MBTA employees will be eliminated.
- New MBTA employees will now have to serve at least 25 years and attain the age of 55 to qualify for retirement benefits from the MBTA.
- All current MBTA employees and new hires will be required to join the state’s Group Insurance Commission.
- MBTA employees will have to decide between pension and disability if out on disability.
- Current turnpike authority employees will become members of the GIC health insurance group.
- Current Tobin Bridge employees will become members of the GIC health insurance group.
- The new Authority becomes responsible for all administrative functions creating cost-savings and efficiencies by eliminating individual, legal, accounting, management, accounting and other back office administrative activities.

### *Oversight*

- The bill creates an Office of Performance Management to help the Authority and its constituent divisions meet benchmarks and run in a businesslike fashion.
- It also creates an Office of Taxpayer Advocacy, to function as a dedicated inspector general or ombudsman for the state system of transportation; it will be empowered to investigate reports and complaints from the general public.
- Health Transportation Compact – the Secretary will work with the Secretary of Health and Human Services to attain positive health goals as it oversees and maintains the state transportation system.

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