



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Transportation  
In support of H.3613 –An Act for a Reliable, Sustainable Massachusetts Bay  
Transportation Authority  
By Robin Roberge, LWVMA Transportation Specialist  
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) supports “a statewide public transportation service, accessible to all, that provides access to jobs, housing, and services while creating minimum disruption of the environment; public monies allocated flexibly to meet public transportation needs.”<sup>1</sup>

Passage and usage of this bill will ensure both the reform and revenue needed to provide a safe, reliable and sustainable transportation service for Commonwealth citizens. There is also a well-documented need for greater investment in statewide transportation solutions.

We agree that the Governor should have authority and responsibility to properly manage the MBTA as a state agency, and we support transparency and accountability.

We specifically ask your support for these provisions in the Joint Committee’s legislation:

- Maintain fare caps on the MBTA so that they rise no more than 5% on average every two years, as voted in 2013, and keeping in place the longstanding free and discounted transfers for MBTA riders who are required to change modes. Steady, predictable fare increases are responsible policy. Spikes in fares will impact ridership. MBTA fares have more than doubled since 2000, growing faster than any other transportation user fee, and MBTA fare recovery as a percentage of operations is consistent with industry averages (and higher than statewide RTAs). The current fare cap is itself a compromise, by ensuring that fares rise modestly, on a set schedule. If the MBTA believes it needs even greater flexibility to raise fares, that case should be made as part of a comprehensive revenue package.
- Maintain MBTA contract assistance that was part of the 2013 legislative framework for the Transportation Finance Act. The MBTA – like every public transportation agency – relies on outside support as part of its operating budget. Reforms will produce efficiencies, but reducing this state subsidy will directly affect services and put more pressure on fares. It is premature to reduce the funding that we know is needed at the MBTA.
- Maintain General Fund transfers to the Commonwealth Transportation Fund, as was voted by the legislature in the 2013 Transportation Finance Act. Statewide, we

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<sup>1</sup> <https://lwwma.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Where-We-Stand.pdf>

have a serious need for investments in transportation services and infrastructure, as has long been documented. Reducing the funding approved by the legislature just 2 years ago will limit the support for regional transportation solutions all throughout Massachusetts.

- Support two common-sense proposals in the Joint Committee's redraft: (1) to allow RTAs to raise own-source revenue without losing state support, thereby investing in improved service, and (2) to allow RTA's to stretch capital investments over multiple years.

The League looks forward to a strong transportation bill that we can urge our members to support.

Thank you for your consideration.