



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Transportation
In support of H.3008/S.2106 – An Act to advance modern and sustainable solutions for
transportation**

**By Launa Zimmaro, LWVMA Energy and Climate Change Specialist
December 5, 2019**

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts and its 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires urge your support of H.3008/S.2106 An Act to advance modern and sustainable solutions for transportation.

It's no secret that frustration over traffic congestion in our Commonwealth is high.¹ In addition to roads strangled by vehicles, Massachusetts is choking on one of the heaviest emissions loads in the country. A full 43% of our state's greenhouse gases come from the transportation sector, compared with 29% for the nation.

While increased traffic may be a sign of increased economic activity and growth, it is also a sign of a system that has failed in fundamental ways to adapt to the needs of a rapidly-changing society and to the critical need to reduce emissions for the sake of public health and a sustainable future. The current system is clearly untenable.

The delay in addressing these needs has left us with a large payment coming due—as is the case with virtually every problem in life when action is delayed. While there are several reasons for this predicament, lack of revenue is always cited as a major culprit.

The good news is the Baker administration's commitment to participate in a regional plan to address emissions from the transportation sector. While the regional plan is not yet final, the goal of the agreement between the nine states involved is to reduce emissions in the transportation sector through a "cap and invest" carbon pricing mechanism, based on the model of the successful Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). How the revenue generated through such an approach will be used is vitally important to the twin goals of bringing down emissions and improving our transportation system.

The bill before you would:

- Create the Modern and Sustainable Solutions for Transportation Trust Fund, where proceeds from the regional transportation program would be deposited;
- Require the Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the Department of Transportation and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, to establish a program to limit and regulate total greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, and ensure compliance with the regional agreement;
- Establish the Modern and Sustainable Solutions for Transportation Investment Board,

¹ Seeing Red: Boston Globe Spotlight series, November 19, 2019:
<https://apps.bostonglobe.com/metro/investigations/spotlight/2019/11/19/seeing-red/>



co-chaired by the Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of Environmental Affairs. The Board would:

- Establish proposal evaluation criteria geared to advancing statewide goals for transportation investment needs;
- Submit a biannual priority investment plan, that would be subject to public hearings across the Commonwealth including in environmental justice communities;
- Be required to report on the performance of the transportation climate program and investments from the trust fund.

It's well past time for a change in how we do transportation in Massachusetts. A regional transportation program, implemented with appropriate caps and performance and investment evaluation criteria, and that includes the public in its development and reporting process, would be a boon to public health, sustainable economic growth and job creation, while getting people where they need to be, stress-free and on time.²

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts urges you to move H.3008/S.2106 out of committee and put it on the road to passage in the legislature this session.

Thank you for your consideration.

² Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Transportation: Opportunities in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, 2015. Georgetown Climate Center & Cambridge Systematics: <https://www.georgetownclimate.org/reports/reducing-greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-transportation-opportunities-in-the-northeast-and-mid-atlantic.html>. Accessed 11/25/19.