

Eileen J. Marum
Summary of SRPEDD Board of Commissioners Meeting
Guest speaker: Joshua Ostroff—T4MA

January 24, 2018

RE: TRANSPORTATION ISSUES HOLDING BACK STATE'S ECONOMY AND HARM QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS

Last year, Massachusetts was named the number one state in the entire country by U.S. News & World Report due to its number one ranking in Education and number two ranking in Healthcare, but the Bay State ranked 45th in transportation, including placing 47th nationally in both road quality and commute time.

Massachusetts transportation issues are holding back the state's economy and harming our quality of life. Across the state, we see first-hand congested roads, decaying bridges, inadequate regional bus service, delayed trains, and streets that are unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.

Transportation for Massachusetts (T4MA) will be traveling the state to help educate leaders and citizens on Two Proposed 2018 Ballot Questions and about transportation policy, needed investments, and financing.

Ballot Question: (1). Laying the Groundwork for "RGGI for Transportation," a Regional, Market-Based Approach to Reducing Pollution from Transportation.

"Transportation is now the largest emitter of greenhouse gases," Mr. Ostroff said. The Baker Administration has acknowledged the need to address transportation emissions through an executive order. Over the last decade, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) has helped reduce emissions from power plants by more than 35 percent, raised hundreds of millions of dollars for energy efficiency programs such as Mass Save, and reduced electric bills for consumers.

Ballot Question: (2). Reducing Traffic Congestion Through Smarter Tolling.

The costs of traffic are immense, and are borne by drivers, businesses, and families and communities along major congested roads. "This important quality-of-life issue makes Massachusetts' economy less competitive," Mr. Ostroff said. T4MA will be pushing MassDOT to test proof-of-concept and pilot programs that give drivers a toll discount for driving off-peak, while reducing congestion for commuters (especially bus riders) who need to travel when roads are in highest demand. According to Mr. Ostroff, this approach has been implemented around the world.