

An Open Letter to Our Customers from Secretary Davey and GM Davis

Start Date: 3/13/2012

An Open Letter to Our Customers,

Over the last nine weeks we have engaged in a public process to allow our riders to weigh in on recommendations for closing a \$159 million budget gap next year. As we conclude that process this week, we want to take a minute to thank you for the unprecedented level of engagement you demonstrated over this period.

Since January, nearly 6,000 of you attended our 31 public meetings, with nearly 2,000 individuals offering public comment. In addition, we received 5,850 emails from you about the importance of the MBTA in your lives. By comparison, the last time the MBTA raised fares in 2007 just 800 people attended a public hearing.

The choices before us are difficult, to be sure. Hearing your individual stories only makes them more so. We know that a quality, reliable public transit system is essential to getting our customers to work, school, doctor's appointments and other activities. We know a public transit option makes our air cleaner and roads less congested. And we know that it is a lifeline for many of you.

We have been honest about our financial problems and we thank you for your willingness to listen. Massive debt costs, coupled with increased operating expenses for things like energy and health care are overburdening our system. The system we have today we cannot afford and the system we want is well beyond reach.

Before our April 4th Board Meeting, we will lay out our final recommendation for closing the Fiscal Year 2013 gap. We continue to work on identifying prudent one-time revenues that will allow us to stave off some of the proposed service cuts for one year. Our final proposal will include both cuts and a fare increase, however.

Unfortunately, without a new dedicated revenue source, we know we will be back in this very place next year. Many legislators attended our public hearings, acknowledging the need for a new solution. The Governor also heard your voices at the hearing he attended in Revere. Our hope is that we may continue these discussions in the coming weeks and months so that we can collectively figure out a way to continue to provide a world-class public transit system to you.

This is your system. Long after we're gone, customers will still have a need and desire for a public transit option. The decisions we make today will have a lasting impact on this system, and we thank you for remaining engaged in this process.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Davey, Secretary and CEO
MassDOT

Jonathan Davis, Acting General Manager
MBTA