



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

SENATOR BRENDAN P. CRIGHTON
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Secretary Stephanie Pollack, Chairwoman
Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Secretary Pollack:

As legislators representing the City of Lynn, we are writing to express our concerns regarding the negative impacts of two major bridge repair projects that are currently underway. The two-year project for structural repairs on the Tobin Bridge, coupled with the North Washington Street Bridge replacement project, directly impact for North Shore commuters who drive to and from Boston. These projects are increasing road congestion throughout our region, as commuters seek alternate routes on already congested arteries, leaving residents of the North Shore with scant options for reasonable rush hour commutes and creating accessibility issues that will stagnate economic growth in our region. Understanding that these important bridge projects must be completed, we request that MassDOT and the Boston MPO consider the spillover effects onto all major roadways from north of Boston into the city and take steps to mitigate negative impacts on these commuter corridors. Shifting drivers to the MBTA commuter rail, as recommended by project planners, is not an adequate solution as peak trains are already often at capacity before they reach Lynn and fares are set to increase.

We request that the Boston MPO utilize highway mitigation funds to increase transit service for residents by adding capacity via year-round water transportation from Lynn. At a time when we are trying to attract investment in the City of Lynn and as new residential developments are underway to provide more affordable housing for residents who work in Boston, we must be proactive to address the substantial negative repercussions of these bridge projects. For residents of the North Shore region, who already face congested roadways and rush hour commuter rail trains at capacity, the overlapping timelines of these bridge projects will most certainly exacerbate conditions.

Chairman
JOINT COMMITTEE ON MUNICIPALITIES
AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Vice Chairman
JOINT COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

JOINT COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH,
SUBSTANCE USE AND RECOVERY

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

We propose that ferry service from Lynn to Boston begin this spring and operate year round for the duration of the Tobin Bridge project. This additional mode of transit would serve to take cars off the road, minimize impacts to other corridors, and increase transit capacity from the North Shore.

The Lynn Ferry, which began with a two-year pilot program in May 2014, demonstrated viability for ferry service from Lynn to Boston for commuters from all over the North Shore. Funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Seaport Advisory Council and in partnership with Boston Harbor Cruises as the operator, the Lynn Ferry completed the second of two years in the pilot program in 2015. Ridership numbers far exceeded projections--13,322 passengers in 2014 and 14,577 passengers in 2015--and broad community and regional support continues to build. As MassDOT and its consultants finalize the procurement of a boat for Lynn ferry service using the \$4.5 million FTA grant funds awarded to the City in 2016, utilizing highway mitigation funds to operate a year round service will help to build awareness of the water route to Boston from Lynn and would allow the City to build momentum to help ensure the future success of year round service.

Residents of the North Shore need additional options for their daily commutes while the scheduled bridge maintenance projects are completed on the Tobin Bridge and the North Washington Street Bridge. We respectfully request that MassDOT and the Boston MPO take the necessary steps to fund ferry service from Lynn beginning this spring in order to provide water transportation as a much needed public transit solution for the entire North Shore region.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Brendan P. Crighton
State Senator
Third Essex District



Lori A. Ehrlich
State Representative
Eleventh Essex District



Daniel F. Cahill
State Representative
Tenth Essex District



Peter Capano
State Representative
Eight Essex District



Donald H. Wong
State Representative
Ninth Essex District