



Office of
Representative Hannah E. Kane
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 31 2022

CONTACT: Sophia Flionis, 617-722 2810
sophia.flionis@mahouse.gov

Rep. Kane supports \$11.3 billion transportation infrastructure and climate bill

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury) recently voted to support an \$11.3 billion transportation infrastructure bond bill that will provide funding for MBTA safety improvements, planning and design costs associated with the East-West Rail project, and hundreds of local transportation and climate resiliency projects across Massachusetts.

House Bill 5151, *An Act relative to Massachusetts' transportation resources and climate*, also known as the MassTRAC bill, was enacted in the House and Senate on July 31 and is now on Governor Charlie Baker's desk for his review. The bill contains compromise language negotiated by a six-member conference committee that worked to reconcile the differences between earlier versions of the bill previously passed in both branches.

Representative Kane noted that House Bill 5151 builds on legislation originally filed by Governor Baker on March 17 to take advantage of the funding opportunities contained in the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) that was signed last November. In addition to targeting funding for highways, roads, bridges, sidewalks, rail and airport improvements, regional transit networks and multi-modal purposes, the bond bill funds a variety of climate adaptation and emissions reduction initiatives, including an expansion of the state's electric vehicle charging infrastructure and incentive programs promoting the use of e-bikes and public transportation, the replacement of high-emissions vehicles, and electric vehicles for hire and carsharing.

House Bill 5151 also includes funding for several local initiatives Representative Kane secured for her district, including: \$5,000,000 for the rehabilitation and box widening of Route 20 from Route 9 to South Street in Shrewsbury and \$1,200,000 for culvert replacements in the town of Westborough. Because these projects are supported with uncommitted bond funding rather than cash, Representative Kane cautioned that there is no set timeline for when this funding will be released, as it must still be worked under the state's annual borrowing cap and could take multiple years to come to fruition.

Representative Kane said the MBTA is slated to receive \$400 million under the bond bill to help address some of the ongoing safety concerns identified by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as part of its preliminary safety management inspection. Those concerns include staffing levels at the MBTA's operations control center; train yard safety protections; track maintenance delays; and the recertification of the MBTA's workforce. The FTA began its investigation in April and is expected to issue a final report in August.

Representative Kane noted that the MassTRAC bill includes language requiring the MBTA to establish a three-year safety improvement plan that identifies measurable safety objectives for each of the next three calendar years, along with an analysis of all modes of transit operated or overseen by the MBTA, including all rail, bus, paratransit and ferry service. In conjunction with the safety improvement plan, the MBTA will also be required to contract with an independent third-party entity with experience and expertise in the operations and safety

requirements for mass transit systems, which will conduct an annual independent safety audit of the MBTA's operations that will look at issues affecting employees, passengers and equipment.

House Bill 5151 also provides \$275 million for the proposed East-West Rail project, which will offer passenger rail service between Pittsfield and Boston with stops in Springfield, Palmer, and Worcester. The funding can be used for a variety of purposes, including planning, design, permitting and engineering, land and right-of-way acquisitions, vehicle procurement, and construction of stations.

Representative Kane noted that a special commission will be established to determine whether the East-West Rail project should be overseen by creating a new entity or by using an existing one. The 20-member commission will hold a minimum of six hearings across the state to solicit public testimony on this topic and will be required to file a report with its recommendations by March 31, 2023.

Other policy provisions contained in the MassTRAC bill provide for:

- the creation of a special commission on mobility pricing that will study and make recommendations by July 1, 2023 on the development and deployment of comprehensive and regionally-equitable public transportation pricing, roadway pricing and congestion pricing;
- the filing of short-term, medium-term and long-term plans for each line of the commuter rail by the MBTA to ensure that the rail system is fully integrated into the Commonwealth's transportation system and designed to make the system more productive, equitable and decarbonized;
- the filing of a monthly report by the MBTA to the Inspector General containing a list of incidents and hazards on any mode of transit operated by the authority or a third party, including any incident or hazard that is required to be reported pursuant to any state or federal regulation, regardless of whether it was already reported;
- the filing of a report by the MBTA by December 31, 2022 on what issues would need to be addressed if the MBTA were to transfer all rights affiliated with its commuter boat service to the Massachusetts Port Authority;
- the filing of a report by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) by March 31, 2023 detailing the state's progress towards complete commuter rail electrification and recommendations for additional resources needed to achieve the goal of complete public transportation electrification by 2050;
- updates to the state's "Dig Safe" laws to require adherence by municipal traffic signal departments;
- a new periodic audit requirement for utility companies working on underground infrastructure to ensure the accuracy of the designated location and marking of its facilities and the utility's adherence to marking standards;
- adequate parking alternatives to be made available to MBTA commuters during the demolition or reconstruction of any MBTA-owned parking lot or parking garage;
- the creation of a searchable website by MassDOT no later than September 30, 2022 so the public can obtain information on how the funding allocated in this bill and from other federal funding sources is being spent;
- an adjusted reporting requirement of every five years, rather than every year, for cities or towns that receive less than \$25,000 from Transportation Network Companies (TNCs); and
- TNCs to report data related to pre-arranged rides to the TNC division within the Department of Public Utilities (DPU), with the division given authorization to obtain additional data from TNCs for the purpose of congestion management.

Governor Baker has until August 10 to sign the MassTRAC bill into law.

###