

HOUSE No. 3585

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
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DEVAL L. PATRICK
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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

July 19, 2013

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

Pursuant to Part the Second, Chapter I, Section I, Article II of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I am returning unsigned House Bill No. 3535, "An Act Relative to Transportation Finance."

Today, with mixed emotions, I am vetoing the transportation finance bill. On the one hand, this bill, in its current form, enables us to reinvest in our transportation network, after decades of willful neglect. It provides some short-term resources to deal with our most pressing needs. It responds to a key priority of my administration and will stimulate many jobs. I thank the Legislature for that. But this good bill is not good enough.

The issue has to do with the fate of the western tolls, and whether we should deal now or later with a problem we can see coming. By current law those tolls come down in 2017, and the people who pay them have been assured they will come down. Some legislators say that the tolls will never come down, despite what the law now requires. Others say that the tolls must come down when scheduled, as a matter of fairness. The Legislature has chosen to deal with it later. That uncertainty makes it difficult to plan a steady, disciplined reinvestment plan sufficient to get the Commonwealth to where it needs to be.

I believe this is an issue to be dealt with now, not put off to another day. Transportation is too important to our citizens, their livelihoods, their quality of life, and our economy as a whole. And too often, those needs are only dealt with when they become a crisis. While this administration and the Legislature have done much to improve on that record, and worked together successfully to address many challenges, I believe this good bill misses a critical opportunity for the people we serve. For these reasons, I will not support it.

Respectfully submitted

Deval L. Patrick,

Governor