

HOUSE No. 4577

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE · BOSTON, MA 02133

KARYN POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

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To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

I write with regard to House bill 4424, “An Act Providing for the Financing of Certain Improvements to Municipal Roads and Bridges.”

I am proud to sign the majority of this bill, which includes important funding for our federally-aided roads and for a new program devoted to small bridges in the Commonwealth.

The Legislature has included in the authorization for the small bridges program a funding constraint that will hamper the program’s effectiveness and flexibility. This program is designed to address failing and deteriorating bridges as quickly as possible, regardless of where they may be located. Capping funding at 20% per highway district per year will only result in diverting funds away from those communities whose applications have demonstrated the greatest need.

For these reasons, and pursuant to section 5 of Article LXIII, as amended by section 4 of Article XC of the Amendments to the Constitution, I hereby disapprove in item 6121-1718, in section 2A, the following wording: “provided further, that not more than 20 per cent of the funds expended under this item, in the aggregate, shall be distributed to projects in 1 highway district;”

The Legislature has also included a section that would require the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to pursue federal funding for the purposes of a vehicle miles traveled (“VMT”) pilot program. Before embarking on a pilot program, I believe that we must first identify any emerging technologies that would be available to support the implementation of

such a pilot program, in addition to identifying any financial obligations the Commonwealth would incur as part of a successful application. Also, I would oppose any VMT program that would impose taxes in addition to the existing gas tax. Lastly, I believe that further consideration and analysis must be given to such a program's impact on the privacy rights of the participants.

For the foregoing reasons, I also disapprove section 7.

The remainder of this bill I approve.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles D. Baker,
Governor