

HOUSE No. 4871

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
24 BEACON STREET · BOSTON, MA 02133

KARYN POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

August 6, 2018

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

While automobile congestion is a problem on the roads of the Commonwealth, lowering tolls for drivers on the small number of roadways with tolls is not an effective response to road congestion, disadvantages those who must drive during the busiest times to get to work and school, and reduces the revenue available to maintain and upgrade those roadways.

The proposed pilot in H. 4831 would not test congestion pricing—which involves increasing prices to change travel behavior—instead, the pilot seeks to test whether it is technologically feasible to charge different tolls at different times. Such testing is unnecessary; the Commonwealth’s all-electronic tolling system can support different tolls at different times.

Rather than conducting a pilot project, we believe it is most productive to continue to focus on efforts to address congestion by continuing to invest in improving the performance and increasing the core capacity of the MBTA; expanding the reach of the MBTA system via the Green Line Extension; working with Regional Transit Authorities to improve their performance; and investing in Complete Streets and other infrastructure improvements that give people more options for walking and biking. These steps will reduce roadway congestion by giving people better choices, not by raising the tolls those who do not have good alternatives to driving at congested times.

At the same time, however, I have instructed MassDOT to complete, within 9 months, a comprehensive analysis of when, where and why congestion is getting worse in the Commonwealth and what additional policies and programs should be put in place to address it.

For these reasons, I am returning H.4831 to you unsigned.

I approve the remainder of this Act.

Respectfully submitted

Charles D. Baker,
Governor