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July 10, 2018

## **RE: Higher Education Comments in Response to Ongoing Transportation and Climate Initiative Listening Sessions**

Dear Governor Charlie Baker, Mayor Muriel Bowser, Governor John Carney, Governor Andrew Cuomo, Governor Larry Hogan, Governor Dannel Malloy, Governor Gina Raimondo, and Governor Phil Scott:

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to develop a regional strategy to reduce transportation emissions and the invitation to provide comments through regional listening sessions and the ongoing stakeholder process. As colleges and universities with campuses throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states, we urge you to prioritize policies and investments to create a clean, equitable and efficient transportation system. Our system for moving people and goods throughout the region has a clear impact on productivity and costs, and our region stands to benefit significantly from making investments today to modernize that system.

In 2016, transportation surpassed the electric power sector as the largest emitter of U.S. greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the first time since 1979. This is partially due to the fact that we have not done enough as a region or nation to spur innovation and investment in how we transport people and goods. To keep our regional economy thriving, we need a future where our employees and students have clean transportation options allowing them to get to and from campus quickly and cost-effectively.

Below, please find our vision for the region's transportation future:

### **Investing in Critical Transportation Infrastructure**

Our region needs roads and bridges that are functional, safe and uncongested to ensure that people and goods can get where they need to go. U.S. News and World Report regularly names the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States near the bottom in transportation infrastructure, and increased investment is sorely needed to reverse this downward trend.<sup>1</sup> These investments should be made in a way that prioritizes resilience and reduces inequality.

<sup>1</sup> Transportation Rankings: Measuring the quality of state transportation infrastructure. U.S. News, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/infrastructure/transportation>

We recognize that creating new sources of revenue for transportation investment is a challenge. As the need for further infrastructure investment becomes increasingly time-sensitive, we urge you to explore new revenue sources that do not impose a disincentive on the deployment of cleaner and more efficient vehicles, which provide fuel cost savings and public health benefits. Clean transportation solutions, such as electric vehicles (EVs), present many benefits to the region, to our campuses and to the communities we operate in.<sup>2</sup> Other options, such as policies that raise revenue based on vehicle miles traveled or greenhouse gases emitted should be considered.

### **Public Transit Accessibility and Efficiency**

Campuses are nothing without their invaluable students and employees. When our students and employees spend hours stuck in traffic, waiting for a late bus, or held up by a disabled train, it takes a toll on their wellbeing, the economy, and our bottom lines. Public transit should be an efficient, affordable, and reliable way for students, faculty, and staff to commute—relieving congestion and reducing air emissions. Investments in public transit benefit all commuters by reducing the number of commuters who have to drive. In addition, as we enter a new era in transportation, governments need to consider ways to integrate new mobility services, such as on demand app-based services and bike-sharing alongside transit in order to ensure its continued viability and efficacy for generations to come.

### **Electrifying the Transportation Sector**

Recent actions and announcements from the global auto industry indicate that the future of transportation is electric. As institutions that rely heavily on road transportation to transport people and goods, we support regional and state policies to accelerate the transition to EVs. We strongly support policies that increase deployment of EVs as well as access to EV charging infrastructure. This infrastructure should be located strategically in public locations with long dwell times, such as workplaces, shopping centers and entertainment venues. We also support modernizing our electric grid and adjusting utility rate structures to incentivize off-peak charging, which can lower electricity rates for all ratepayers and optimize the grid. The future of vehicles is electric, and we believe that the entire region could benefit from greater coordination and collaboration to advance our clean transportation future.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. As members of the higher education community, we look forward to partnering with you as you consider how our region can modernize our transportation sector and invest in our clean transportation future.

Sincerely,

Bennington College

Bunker Hill Community College

Colgate University

Eastern Connecticut State University

Emerson College

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<sup>2</sup> M.J. Bradley & Associates and Ceres: Accelerating Investment in Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure. November 2017. <https://www.ceres.org/news-center/press-releases/new-report-finds-increased-investment-electric-vehicle-infrastructure>

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Washington College  
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