March 12, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

RE: Employer Support for Regional Proposal for Clean Transportation

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We are a diverse group of organizations and businesses united by the once-in-a-generation opportunity to modernize and decarbonize our region’s transportation system. We are writing to express our strong support for the draft Memorandum of Understanding on the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI).

We believe that the policy created through TCI will achieve several of our shared goals concurrently: mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from transportation; where applicable help meet binding carbon reduction goals; invest in much-needed public transit, alternative transportation and road infrastructure; make the region more economically competitive; alleviate congestion; provide benefits for rural communities; and generate a revenue stream to fund these and future transportation improvements.

Why TCI is Not a Gas Tax
TCI is a carbon pricing system focused on an essential outcome: reducing pollution from the transportation sector. TCI would establish a regional cap on carbon emissions while auctioning emissions allowances. Proceeds from the TCI allowance sales would be sent back to the states and used for programs that allow consumers to avoid paying higher fees at the gas pump—electric vehicle (EV) incentives, public transit, rural broadband to support telecommuting and telemedicine, and more. Eventually, TCI investments could eliminate the need for allowance sales over time. A gas tax, by contrast, allows states to raise and spend revenues however they like with no direct transportation or environmental benefits, such as emissions reductions or consumer protections.

Investment in Transportation Infrastructure and EVs
We are heartened by the opportunity to invest in new and improved transit solutions (through the proceeds from TCI allowance sales) that will make transit and alternative transportation modes more affordable, reliable, safe, and accessible. Public transit remains the most carbon-efficient, affordable and equitable way to move people and reduce congestion. Physical mobility and economic mobility are also inextricably linked.

Electrification of transportation is also essential to tackling the climate crisis. TCI will support this transition by allowing states to develop programs that encourage the purchase of electric and low-carbon-emitting vehicles (fleets, buses, passenger vehicles, trucks and rail) and equitably build out essential charging infrastructure across the region. As we continue to decarbonize the transportation sector, provide charging infrastructure, and add more renewable energy to the grid, will have an increasingly positive environmental impact on our region.
Benefits for Rural Communities
TCI proceeds can and should be used to give residents more choices and support economic development in rural communities. Funds can be used to upgrade infrastructure that will increase broadband access in underserved communities, support integration of technology in motor vehicles, enable use of TNCs, support EV charging infrastructure in rural areas, and enable more frequent bus service, or better access to commuter trains. For those who have to drive, EV cost savings increase the more miles a vehicle travels on the road. TCI can support incentives, rebates and charging infrastructure to help people purchase these vehicles, eliminate gasoline expenses, and pocket the savings from reduced vehicle maintenance requirements.

Tackle Emissions for Those Most Impacted by Pollution
States also have an opportunity to use the TCI proceeds to prioritize emission reduction in communities that are disproportionately burdened by pollution and have the least access to reliable transportation options. We support the TCI states’ efforts to prioritize consideration for funds and programs in these most vulnerable communities.

The existing transportation system has a chokehold on our economy and our climate goals. We feel an urgency to create a transportation future that enables economic growth and substantial decarbonization. We encourage all participating states to sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

Thank you,

Acadia Center
Akamai Technologies*
Alliance for Business Leadership
Anbaric Development Partners
Argyle Brewing Company, LLC
Associated Industries of Massachusetts
Autodesk*
Baldwin Brothers*
Bemis Associates
Ben and Jerry’s Homemade, Inc.*
Big Tree Farms, Inc.
Biogen*
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts*
Baroco
Boston Green Ribbon Commission
Boston Trust Walden*
Burgundy Basin
Burton*
Cape Air*
Ceres
Chatham University
Clif Bar*
Climate Dads
Connecticut League of Conservation Voters
DHL*
DIAG Studios, PLLC
Domini Impact Investments, LLC
Drawing Conclusions LLC
DSM North America*
E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs)
E4TheFuture
Eastern Bank
Eastern Connecticut State University
EcoPlum
ECOS
Edelmann Love Properties Inc.
EILEEN FISHER*
Endosys, LLC
Enel North America*
Environmental League of Massachusetts
Etsy*
Evergreen Home Performance, LLC
Eversource Energy*
FirstLight Power
Framingham State University
Friends Fiduciary Corporation
Glen’s Garden Market
Hackensack Meridian Health*
Haverford College
HeartPath Acupuncture
Hirshberg Strategic
IKEA North American Services, LLC*
Inherent Group, LP
Investor Advocates for Social Justice*
JLL*
Kendall Sustainable Infrastructure
Kinetic Communities
Legal Sea Foods*
Lime*
M&E Engineers, Inc.
Massachusetts Business Roundtable
Massachusetts Competitive Partnership
Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation
Metis Consulting Group
Miller/Howard Investments*
NAIOP Massachusetts, The Commercial Real Estate Development Association
New England Power Generators Association
New Jersey League of Conservation Voters
New Jersey Sustainable Business Council
Northeast Clean Energy Council
Novartis*
Pax World Funds*
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Refresh Interiors
Renewable Energy Vermont
Retailers Association of Massachusetts
Rivanna Natural Designs, Inc.
Rivermoor Energy
Saint Peter’s University
Saunders Hotel Group
Schneider Electric*
School Sisters of Notre Dame Cooperative Investments
Second Nature
Seventh Generation*
Sigma Consultants, Inc.
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA
Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia
Sisters of St. Dominic of Caldwell
State Street Corporation*
Stonyfield Organic*
Studio G Architects
Sustainable Food Trade Association
The Green Engineer, Inc
The Nature Conservancy
The Sustainability Group of Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge*
Transport Hartford Academy at the Center for Latino Progress
Trillium Asset Management*
TripZero
UMass Lowell Climate Change Initiative
Unilever*
Unitarian Universalist Association
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
US Green Building Council-NJ
Vert Asset Management
Virginia Wesleyan University
Wells College
WeNeedaVacation.com, LLC
Widener University Commonwealth Law School
Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce
Worthen Industries*
Zaurie Zimmerman Associates

* Denotes over $100 Million in annual revenue or $1 billion or more in assets under management.

For more information or to connect with the signatories please contact icarlson@ceres.org.

CC:
Basil Seggos, Commissioner, New York Department of Environmental Conservation
Marie Therese Dominguez, Commissioner, New York Department of Transportation