



Equitable Green Investment in Our Communities

Aiming for justice with Carbon Pricing & Transportation - H.2810 & S.2106/H.3008

As a commonwealth, we have placed a significant focus on cutting our climate change-causing pollution from electricity, but we need to have a comprehensive approach to address other sectors. Transportation and heating represent a disproportionate share of our emissions as a state, in addition to being an increasing financial strain on low-income people. We need to address these problems while providing better opportunities that build our communities and invest in our low and middle-income families.

H.2810: An Act to Promote Green Infrastructure and Reduce Carbon Emissions (Rep. Benson)

This bill would establish a direct carbon price on transportation and home heating fuels to fund significant green municipal investment while providing additional assistance to individuals and employers in the form of rebates. This bill includes the following stipulations:

- **HOUSEHOLD AND EMPLOYER REBATES**

Households and employers will be rebated 70% of all funds, with separate dedicated funds established for each group, to offset most of the cost of increases on fuels. The data clearly shows that on average, due to usage patterns, low to middle-income households will come out ahead: they will get back more in rebates than they pay in any cost increases.

- **PROTECTING LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSEHOLDS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

The bill accounts for cost impacts and provides higher rebates for low to middle-income households, and for less populated communities where people drive more, and provides additional money for recipients of fuel assistance.

- **NEED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

Massachusetts' infrastructure needs investment. Climate change poses new threats to roads, stormwater and wastewater management systems, and coastal communities. Aging buildings need upgrades to reduce energy costs, particularly in the parts of the Commonwealth least able to pay for efficiency improvements. Our transportation system also requires billions of dollars for improvements and repairs. House Bill 2810 will raise \$400–\$600 million a year for a Green Infrastructure Fund that could provide funding for all these needed investments. At least 40% of funds must be used for projects that benefit low-income households and communities.

Regarding the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI). Our transportation sector is broken and dangerously contributing to the climate crisis. We need major and continued investments in our public transportation systems and our roads and bridges all across Massachusetts. It's important that all of the transitions include solutions like low-fare or free public transportation, regional transit like high speed rail, and electric buses.

Currently our Governor is exploring a declining, regional cap on vehicle emissions for TCI, similar to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (which put a cap on power plant carbon emissions), that uses the money generated by price on transportation fuels to drive down our climate pollution from that sector.

It's important that all of our climate transitions are solutions-oriented and include low fare or free public transportation, regional transit like high speed rail, and cleaning up our public transportation with electric buses and trains. These are the first step to getting people out of their cars. This is especially important because market mechanisms like cap and invest often get passed onto consumers and may hit low income folks hardest, the very same communities that have the fewest options to get their families to work and school. Gateway cities where significant numbers of low-income and people of color live, such as Springfield and New Bedford are served by deeply underfunded Regional Transit Authorities- it is not fair to increase the cost of driving without proactively providing other solutions and options first.

S.2106/H.3008 An Act to Advance Modern and Sustainable Solutions for Transportation (Rep Ehrlich and Sen Lesser): To protect vulnerable communities, this bill would form a commission with substantial representation from those communities. Specifically, it aims to:

- Ensure the allocation of revenue is informed by the needs of vulnerable communities and that the money goes where communities want it
- Provide sufficient protections for low income, Environmental Justice, and other vulnerable communities and ensure that the policy outcomes are progressive rather than regressive

The MPF coalition has made it a top priority to ensure that the climate policies we support are just & equitable.