

December 11, 2008

Michael Kelleher, Founder  
Spencer Kimball, Director  
Stop the Pike Hike  
East Boston, MA 02128

Dear Mr. Kelleher and Mr. Kimball,

Thank you for your participation in the effort to defeat the proposal to raise the tolls on the Massachusetts Turnpike, as well as those required to travel through the Callahan/Sumner and Ted Williams Tunnels. As you know, the City of Boston is also opposed to this proposal and we are working hard to ensure that our concerns are heard and mitigated before any action is taken.

Although the City of Boston commends your commitment to this objective, we must inform you that we have serious misgivings about your plan for the "Boston Toll Party" scheduled for Tuesday, December 16. We understand that as part of the statewide protest, drivers will be encouraged to avoid the MassPike and travel instead on local roads. As we have stated at recent hearings on the toll hike issue, diverting thousands of vehicles off of the highway system and onto local roads will create a number of serious problems for the city. These problems include increased traffic on residential streets, a financial impact on our residents and business community, a question of whether or not the MBTA has the ability to handle additional ridership, and environmental concerns.

Furthermore, the threat to public safety is of utmost importance to the city. More than 129,000 vehicles pass through the three harbor tunnels each day and 70,000 vehicles travel into Boston each day via the Pike. Put these on local, neighborhood streets to join the 350,000 plus vehicles that are registered to Boston residents and gridlock will prevail. The grim result would be fire trucks and ambulances wasting precious minutes stuck in traffic, police vehicles being hindered by congestion from getting to where officers are needed, and pedestrians being placed in harm's way simply by trying to cross the street.

Encouraging drivers to use local streets on Tuesday hurts the same people for whom you are being an advocate. For instance, East Boston has a high concentration of senior citizens, many of whom frequently take public transportation to Central Square to run errands, meet friends for a meal, or visit the Meridian Street branch of the Boston Public Library. The information on your web page advises "Boston Toll Party" participants to avoid the airport tolls by driving straight past the toll booths, crossing Bennington Street in Central Square and turning right onto Meridian Street, before heading to the Meridian Street Bridge and into the City of Chelsea. This puts these vehicles on the identical path with Central Square seniors and other pedestrians tending to their personal business in this thriving neighborhood business district. Throughout each and every one of Boston's neighborhoods there are similar circumstances where

traffic and pedestrian safety will be jeopardized, and schoolchildren, senior citizens, and all local drivers and pedestrians, will be put at risk by your plan.

We cannot condone the "Boston Toll Party" and we are advising you to cancel the event in the interest of public safety. The City of Boston is of the opinion that a significant escalation in traffic on local streets will wreak havoc on our neighborhoods. We are opposed to this proposal by the Turnpike Authority due to these issues and we have the same concerns for your plan as it will replicate the results of their proposal, albeit for only one day. As city administrators, it would be irresponsible for us to stand by and allow Boston's residents and daily commuting population to be put at risk. We are asking for your understanding and expect your full cooperation in this matter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Menino  
Mayor of Boston

Thomas J. Tinlin, Commissioner  
Boston Transportation Department

Edward F. Davis, Commissioner  
Boston Police Commissioner

Roderick J. Fraser, Commissioner  
Boston Fire Department