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News Release

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MTF and ABC Call on Governor and Legislature to Reform Transportation Agencies

The Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation and the Artery Business Committee today released a major report that calls on the Governor and the Legislature to reform the state's transportation agencies to produce more comprehensive and integrated priority setting, to enhance the state's capacity to finance transportation investments, and to strengthen the Commonwealth's ability to operate and maintain its transportation assets.

The report, *The Road to Reform: Restructuring the Commonwealth's Transportation Agencies*, commends the Governor and the Legislature for recognizing the limitations of the state's current organization and for initiating debate with serious restructuring proposals.

The report raises a number of questions about the proposed merger of the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority and the Highway Department, including:

- Whether making tolls a revenue source in the state budget would undercut long-term funding for the Metropolitan Highway System (MHS) and the Turnpike;
- Whether the Highway Department would be able to manage its dramatically expanded responsibilities under the proposed merger within its financial and staffing constraints, including:
 - the completion of the Central Artery project,
 - the ongoing operation and maintenance of the MHS, and
 - the department's current mission of maintaining and repairing the bulk of the state's highway system;
- Whether closing the state's budget gap is an appropriate use of MassPike reserves; and
- Whether the projected \$20 million in ongoing savings could be fully realized.

MTF President Michael J. Widmer and ABC President Richard Dimino said, "We urge the administration, the Legislature and all of the affected parties to work together to reform the Commonwealth's transportation agencies. Far-reaching reforms are needed if we are to develop the first-class transportation system required to sustain the state's economic competitiveness and quality of life."