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February 19, 2008

Representative Michael Rush  
Chairman, Parks Caucus  
The State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative Rush,

Thank you for your recent inquiry about management roles for other agencies relative to the DCR parkways.

As you know, the Commonwealth has a well-documented backlog of both capital and operating funds for both our park system and our transportation infrastructure. Governor Patrick has – in close cooperation with the Legislature – already made a substantial commitment to addressing both challenges. With your partnership, the citizens of the Commonwealth can expect better parks and better transportation in the years ahead.

The Governor has also charged Secretary Cohen with the task of developing a comprehensive proposal to planning, prioritizing, financing and managing the repair and maintenance of our roads, bridges, and public transportation assets. In this context and as it relates to DCR, we have placed a priority on the 31 structurally deficient DCR bridges. The Governor's five year capital plan commits \$196 million for these bridges and we expect there to be close cooperation between DCR and MHD as projects like the BU, Craigie, Woods Memorial and Longfellow Bridges are rehabilitated. While we anticipate that MHD will assume primary responsibility for rehabilitation and management of these bridges, the DCR Commissioner will have approval of the final designs of any work done on these bridges. In addition, DCR and MHD have cooperated on the snow plowing and ice removal on two-thirds of the DCR parkways.

With regard to the maintenance of DCR parkways, Secretary Cohen and I both recognize the sensitivity surrounding these historic roadways and appreciate their fundamental integration into the Commonwealth's park system. As you know, we have not put any proposal before the Legislature that would create a role for MHD or any other agency in the "curb to curb" maintenance of the DCR parkways. Furthermore, we pledge to you the following:

- No such proposal will be forthcoming without inclusion of a full public consultative process about how, whether and when it would be appropriate to change DCR's role;
- We both have a firm commitment to inclusion and use of the *Historic Parkways Preservation and Treatment Guidelines* under any potential scenario; and
- We would not seek to alter DCR's responsibility for the parkways through administrative means alone, but would do so only with the Legislature's explicit authorization.

I'd also like to clarify a related matter. I understand that Section 13 of the Transportation Bond Bill seems to send a conflicting message about funding and agency responsibilities relative to projects authorized under the bill. Secretary Cohen and I have both recommended to the Legislature that this section be removed from the legislation.

The metropolitan parkway system is a national model and a regional treasure. These parkways are precious state assets and must be protected. I look forward to continuing to work with you and ask you to keep an open mind about the range of options available to the Commonwealth to address decades of under-investment in both our park system and our transportation infrastructure.

Thank you again for your support of DCR's vital mission.

Sincerely,



Ian A. Bowles  
Secretary of Energy and  
Environmental Affairs

cc: Secretary Bernard Cohen. EOT  
Commissioner Richard Sullivan, DCR