



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

General Court

July 31, 2020

Chief Kenneth Green
MBTA
240 Southampton Street
Boston, MA 02118

Dear Chief Green,

It has come to our attention that the Transit Police have recently disbanded their highly regarded and respected Transit SWAT unit. As public officials and stewards of taxpayer resources, we can appreciate the need to ensure that resources are most appropriately allocated. We question the rationale of this decision and the long-term effects on the safety of the riders of the transit system and preparedness of the Transit Police to respond to an incident within their jurisdiction. While well intentioned, the disbandment of a SWAT unit trained specifically to deal with issues on our transit system seems ill advised. The fact that they have not been utilized much over the last few years does not mean that they aren't a vital and necessary component to the public safety responsibilities and emergency operations that will be required. As we have seen in other countries, a public transit system is often a target for both foreign and domestic terrorism and having a SWAT unit with specialized training ensures that we remain vigilant and ready to face such threats to public safety.

We are respectfully requesting that you share the reasoning for the decision to disband the transit SWAT team and to explain in detail what measures you have put in place to replace the loss of this specially trained force. We would also like to know the costs associated with the Transit unit and what savings you expect to realize as a result of this decision. We would appreciate any information you are able to share. We are especially concerned with this development as there have been previous news reports that State Police and other law enforcement groups have been denied access to use of public transportation to access locations experiencing protests and large gatherings of people. While it is our right to peacefully protest, we have concerns about nefarious groups using these events, much like the marathon, to inflict harm on innocent people. While we believe it is always prudent to periodically review services being offered by public agencies, we are concerned that we are abandoning vital public safety infrastructure and operations to facilitate adherence with a change of policing tactics and strategies without proper analysis. Should an incident occur on our public transit system, having a specially trained team at the ready seems like a prudent measure and one that would most likely save lives. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Moore".

Senator Michael Moore
Second Worcester

Senator Bruce Tarr
First Essex and Middlesex

Senator Marc Pacheco
First Plymouth and Bristol

Senator Michael Rush
Norfolk and Suffolk

Senator Anne M. Gobi
Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire
and Middlesex

Senator John Velis
Second Hampden and Hampshire

Senator Michael Brady
Second Plymouth and Bristol

Senator Walter Timilty
Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth

Senator Ryan Fattman
Worcester and Norfolk District

Senator James T. Welch
Hampden District

Senator Dean Tran
Worcester and Middlesex

Senator Patrick O'Connor
Plymouth and Norfolk

Cc: Governor Charlie Baker
Secretary Stephanie Pollack
Secretary Thomas Turco