INVEST NOW

A NEWSLETTER FOR RIDERS AND WORKERS

June 2017

WHO WE ARE:

INVEST NOW is dedicated to ensuring investments in Massachusetts public transit. INVEST NOW includes riders, workers, community groups, non-profit organizations, businesses, elected leaders and municipalities that support public transit.

WHAT WE STAND FOR:

Massachusetts workers and riders agree that the time to invest in public transit is now. The MBTA should continue to make improvements to its current operations, but that cannot distract from the greater need to invest in public transit for riders, workers, and our communities.

The long term costs of sweeping privatization are often higher than expected – as has been demonstrated in cities across the nation as well as internationally. Let's keep public transportation public – and invest in a stronger future for riders, workers, and the Massachusetts economy.

CONTACT US

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It's Time for Real Transparency at the T

The public is losing control of the MBTA. A growing number of MBTA private contractors, privatization failures, and inside deals have hurt riders and workers. The latest private company to leave riders high and dry is Global Contact Services whose failures to serve the MBTA's most vulnerable riders including seniors and people with disabilities were highlighted on the front page of the Boston Globe[1].

Governor Baker and venture capitalist Brian Shortsleeve have not only failed to adequately invest in the MBTA, they are also selling it off piece by piece to fulfill an extremist vision of an MBTA that is removed from public control for the sake of corporate profits.

When corporations have underbid on MBTA contracts, Baker has waived the fees and penalties, leaving taxpayers and riders holding the tab. Underbidding and inside deals also hurt riders and workers. The privatization and outsourcing failures plaguing the MBTA are not isolated incidents. They are part of a dangerous and expensive pattern caused by a lack of transparency and the lack of accountability. The frontline workforce of the MBTA must have a voice in the future of our public transit – and their voice should be prioritized over the private transit company lobbyists with financial ties to the Governor's inner circle.

1. Vaccaro, Adam. "Complaints rising at The Ride." *The Boston Globe* 23 Jun. 2017

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Community Groups Speak Out Against Shortsleeve Transit Board Appointment

Local groups are joining together[1] in opposition to Governor Baker's proposed appointment of outgoing MBTA Chief Administrator and Acting General Manager Brian Shortsleeve to the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board.

In an open letter[2] addressed to the legislature, Massachusetts Senior Action Council, Alternatives for Community and Environment, GreenRoots, and the Chinese Progressive Association, expressed concerns about Shortsleeve's failure to disclose new business interests and questioning whether they create conflicts of interest.

This opposition to Baker's continued efforts to privatize MBTA services further demonstrate the community's frustration with privatization efforts and highlights the urgent need for investment in public transportation services.

Other groups that have since signed on to the letter include: Chelsea Collaborative; City Life/Vida Urbana; Clean Water Action Massachusetts; the Coalition for Social Justice; the Immigrant Worker Center Collaborative; the Mass Voter Table; Matahari Women's Worker Center; and New England United for Justice.

1. See the press release: https://www.ace-ej.org/mbta

2. Read the full letter: http://mailchi.mp/ca9441c4004e/shortsleeve-fmcb-appointment-lacks-transparency-310931

What can you do?

Support the MBTA Transparency Amendment.

The Transparency Amendment would simply require the MBTA to negotiate in good faith with frontline employees to improve conditions for riders and workers – and to identify responsible cost savings where possible – before selling off or contracting out additional components of our public transit system for corporate profit, including contracts that may be awarded to companies like Keolis with financial ties to Governor Baker's inner circle, former advisors, or campaign staff.

Call 617-722-2000 to contact all of the House/Senate Budget Conferees: Senators Spilka, DiDomenico, and deMacedo, plus Representatives Dempsey, Kulik, and Smola, plus House Speaker Robert DeLeo.

Tell them that in order to protect taxpayers, riders, and workers from further privatization schemes, you are advocating for the inclusion of the **MBTA Transparency Amendment, Senate Amendment 1031, in the final FY2018 state budget.**

What are some of the specific examples of MBTA privatization and outsourcing disasters that have hurt taxpayers, workers, and riders?

Too many MBTA privatization and outsourcing contracts have been failures. We need the MBTA Transparency Amendment to pump the breaks on these kinds of bad deals for the sake of taxpayers, riders, and workers. Recent examples of MBTA privatization and outsourcing disasters include:

Keolis: Complete failure by the Governor's office to hold them accountable for chronically poor service and not putting enough trains on the line. Penalties and fines have been waived despite terrible performance.

Maine Military Authority (MMA): Outsourcing bus maintenance to the MMA has caused massive cost overruns and repair delays costing taxpayers millions and sidelining key MBTA fleet vehicles.

TransDev: TransDev is shockingly under active consideration for MBTA bus maintenance RFPs, despite their international reputation for service problems and delays.

Bridj: This company collapsed and went bankrupt just as Baker officials eyed privatizing rider services to the startup despite existing conflicts of interest.

S.J. Services: Understaffing MBTA janitors and cutting hours to deny workers health care led to dirtier stations and widespread protests.

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LAZ Parking: More than a million dollars in MBTA parking lot fees were allegedly stolen under this private contract.

Global Contact Services: Increasing complaints from seniors and people with disabilities about The Ride service coordination by Global Contact Services were highlighted just this weekend in the Boston Globe.

Brinks: The increasing use of poverty wage companies like Brinks who do not pay a living wage.

Riders' voices: Regina Tham - Quincy, MA

Quincy resident Regina Tham speaks out against privatization and for transparency at the T.

"As someone who uses the MBTA everyday, I believe that the privatization of the MBTA is a poor choice that will add to the lack of transparency and reliability. Although the privatization has been made to seem positive, past experiences have shown us that the privatization efforts will only bring failure as with Keolis and the commuter rail. Since it was clear that the privatization of the commuter rail with Keolis was a failure, I think it is even clearer that the privatization of the MBTA does not have any positives for the riders that it serves. It will not be beneficial for the workers or riders.

Additionally, I think that the MBTA needs to be more transparent with its riders. The lack of transparency regarding the future business ventures of MBTA Chief Administrator Brian Shortsleeve with the recent proposed appointment of Mr. Shortsleeve to the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board is concerning. The MBTA should be striving to be transparent and working to support its riders. The privatization will only add to the lack of transparency between the MBTA and the public."

WE MUST INVEST NOW TO ACHIEVE:

MODERN, RELIABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION that supports Boston's dynamic economy, growing workforce, and role as a world-class city.

SAFE TRANSPORTATION that riders and our communities can trust every time they step aboard without exceptions.

EQUITABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACCESS to ensure that service expansions bring opportunity and economic development to under-served communties.

QUALITY JOBS that can sustain a family, contribute to our local economy, and help reduce the extreme levels of income inequality in our state.

DEVELOPMENT of MBTA land and property that benefit our communities, not just developers, by creating good jobs and affordable housing.

TRANSPARENCY for MBTA bidding and contracting, including restored taxpayer and worker protections under the Pacheco law to prevent wasteful privatization schemes and insider dealing.

TAKE ACTION

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