ATTACHMENT Q

July 8, 2016

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

 Pursuant to Article LVI, as amended by Article XC, Section 3 of the Amendments to the Constitution, I am returning to you for amendment Section 180 of House Bill No. 4450, “An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2017 for the Maintenance of the Departments, Boards, Commissions, Institutions and Certain Activities of the Commonwealth, for Interest, Sinking Fund and Serial Bond Requirements and for Certain Permanent Improvements.”

Section 180 would require the Department of Transportation to study the feasibility of establishing high-speed rail service between Springfield and Boston. While I support studying ways to improve transportation between Springfield and Boston, several aspects outlined in Section 180 are already the subject of ongoing studies. Moreover the proposed study focuses exclusively on high-speed rail, ignoring the potential benefits of improving and coordinating other modes of transportation including automobile, bus, passenger rail, freight rail, and other common carrier services.

Accordingly, I believe that we would be better served by convening a working group to identify and evaluate whether improvements to these various modes of transportation between Springfield and Boston would result in significant economic and cultural benefits to the greater Springfield region and the commonwealth as a whole.

For this reason, I recommend that Section 180 be amended by striking out the text and inserting in place thereof the following text:-

SECTION 180.  The Massachusetts Department of Transportation shall convene a working group, not later than October 1, 2016, for the purposes of identifying and evaluating the economic and cultural benefits and challenges to the greater Springfield region and the commonwealth as a whole, through the potential expansion and enhancement several modes of transportation between the “Knowledge Corridor” and Springfield and Boston, including automobile, bus, passenger rail, freight rail, and other common carrier services.  The working group shall include, but not be limited to a designee from the Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, elected officials from the state and federal legislative delegations and duly elected Mayors along the Knowledge Corridor and in the greater Springfield region, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, existing rail service stakeholders, including Amtrak, PanAm, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, private bus carriers and CSX Railways. The Secretary & CEO of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation shall designate a qualified individual to chair the working group.  The working group shall draw upon the findings and conclusions of the Transforming the Rail Network for Economic and Community Development Report (September 2012) and the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative Study to guide its evaluation and analysis. The working group shall submit its findings to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the Joint Committee on Transportation no later than March 3, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,