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**Boston City Councilor Michelle Wu Delivers Petition Opposing MBTA Fare Increases**

*Coalition of elected leaders, grassroots organizations, and community members jointly delivered petition with over 2,700 signatures from every neighborhood of Boston and beyond.*

BOSTON – Tonight, Boston City Councilor At-Large Michelle Wu presented representatives from the MBTA with a 2,700-signature petition opposing the MBTA’s proposed 6% fare increase and urging immediate steps toward transit equity and access.

“The proposed 6% fare hike would place an undue burden on residents already struggling to meet transportation-related costs, totaling an unaffordable 41% increase in MBTA fares since 2012,” reads the petition. “The increased costs would push more commuters to drive, undercutting our most urgent goal of increasing transit ridership to ease congestion, limit air pollution, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”

A coalition of local elected officials joined Councilor Wu’s opposition to the fare hike by signing on to her petition, including Boston City Councilors Andrea Campbell, Boston City Council President, District 4, Michael Flaherty, At-Large, Annissa Essabai-George, At-Large, Althea Garrison, At-Large, Lydia Edwards, District 1, Ed Flynn, District 2, Tim McCarthy, District 5, Matt O'Malley, District 6, Kim Janey, District 7, Josh Zakim, District 8, and Mark Ciommo, District 9; State Senators Sonia Chang-Díaz, Second Suffolk and Sal DiDomenico, Middlesex and Suffolk; State Representatives Adrian Madaro, 1st Suffolk, Jay Livingston, 8th Suffolk, Nika Elugardo, 15 Suffolk, Liz Miranda, 5th Suffolk, Andy Vargas, 3rd Essex, Mike Connolly, 26th Middlesex, Tommy Vitolo, 15th Norfolk, Maria Robinson, 6th Middlesex, Tram Nguyen, 18th Essex, Tami Gouveia, 14th Middlesex, and Cambridge Vice Mayor Jan Devereux.

Also joining Wu as co-sponsors of the petition were a number of grassroots organizations, including Boston Clean Energy Coalition, Boston Climate Action Network, Boston Cyclists Union Fairmount Indigo Transit Coalition, Greater Boston Young Democrats, Green Streets Initiative, LivableStreets Alliance, Massachusetts Climate Action Network, Massachusetts Sierra Club, Progressives Massachusetts, Sustainable Sudbury, Tufts SPINES, WalkUP Roslindale, West Roxbury Saves Energy, and 350 Massachusetts.

“Tonight, we delivered a mandate to the MBTA on behalf of over 2,700residents. Riders of every T line, from every neighborhood in Boston and others across Massachusetts, stood together urging transit equity and access, not fare increases,” said Councilor Wu. “This moment in history demands aggressive action against the threats of income inequality and climate change. Sustainable, affordable, reliable public transit is fundamental to providing Boston residents with the greatest access to jobs, schools, and opportunities beyond their home neighborhoods.”

The petition also outlines ways in which the MBTA could remove barriers for public transit to ensure the right of mobility for all, including the creation of free, unlimited, year-round youth and senior passes,committing to a low-income fare, and designating fare-free bus lanes through underserved communities.

The petition goes on to urge the MBTA to take immediate steps towards fare equity. These include a commitment to rejecting distance-based bus and subway fares, which have been shown to be regressive, as more residents are being priced out of housing close to job centers. The petition further calls for a re-zoning of the commuter rail fares so that all of Boston is Zone 1A and no municipality is split between multiple fare zones.

Finally, petition signers asked the MBTA to focus on building a sustainable funding base for public transit by implementing smarter tolling and congestion pricing and supporting increased surcharges for rideshare services, such as Uber and Lyft.

Councilor Wu has long championed a climate and economic justice-centered approach to public transit. She first announced her opposition to the MBTA’s proposed fare hikes in an [Op-Ed in the Boston Globe](https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2019/01/31/opinion-michelle-forget-fare-hikes-make-free/vJpKVu6Rft2C4Esi50mB5M/story.html), where she argued that Boston should set fare-free public transportation as the target goal.

*The full text of Councilor Wu’s petition can be found below.*

*Dear Members of the Fiscal Management and Control Board, Secretary Pollack, and Governor Baker:*

*We oppose the proposal to raise MBTA fares.*

*The proposed 6% fare hike would place an undue burden on residents already struggling to meet transportation-related costs, totaling an unaffordable 41% increase in MBTA fares since 2012. The increased costs would push more commuters to drive, undercutting our most urgent goal of increasing transit ridership to ease congestion, limit air pollution, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.*

*We are running out of time to transform our economy and society in the face of climate change, and the Greater Boston region is now confronted with the worst traffic in the nation.The proposed fare increase represents a step in the wrong direction when we can’t afford anything less than aggressive progress forward.*

*We urge you to reject the fare increases and instead take steps toward a fare-free transit system to ensure the right of mobility for all:*

* *Create a single youth pass with free, unlimited, year-round access to the MBTA. Currently, MBTA options for students and youth passes are needlessly complicated and inconsistent, and are turning the next generation of riders against public transportation.*
* *Extend the same free, unlimited, year-round pass to seniors residing in Massachusetts.*
* *Provide low-income riders with Charlie Cards and a low-income fare option, distributing these MBTA passes through agencies that administer SNAP and other means-tested benefits.*

*We also urge the MBTA to take immediate steps for fare equity:*

* *Commit to rejecting distance-based bus and subway fares, which have been shown to be regressive, as more residents are being priced out of housing close to job centers.*
* *Rezone the commuter rail fares so that all of Boston is Zone 1A and no municipality is split between multiple fare zones.*
* *As the MBTA moves toward a cashless fare collection system, reject plans to spend resources on costly fare vending machines at every bus stop and instead designate the bus routes where riders will depend on cash as fare-free routes.*

*Finally, we ask that you focus on building a sustainable funding base for public transit:*

* *Advocate for the Transportation & Climate Initiative.*
* *Implement smarter tolling and congestion pricing.*
* *Support increased surcharges for TNCs (such as Uber and Lyft) that encourage shared rides.*
* *Support legislation to enable regional ballot initiatives that would allow voters to identify and raise revenues for transit priorities.*

*Transportation planning must not exist in a vacuum, and fare hikes will only continue to exacerbate the inequities and climate and public health challenges facing our city and region. Please take action to strengthen opportunities for generations to come by embracing transit equity and access.*

*Signed,*

*To learn more about Councilor At-Large Michelle Wu visit* [*http://michelleforboston.com*](http://michelleforboston.com/) *or connect with her on* [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/michelleforboston/)*,* [*Twitter*](https://twitter.com/wutrain)*, or* [*Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/wutrain/)*.*