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Senate Votes for Legislation to Repair State's Bridges

(Boston, MA) – The Senate on Thursday approved legislation to accelerate the repair and replacement of the state's most structurally deficient bridges. The \$3 billion bond bill, originally filed by Governor Patrick, establishes an eight-year plan to fix 250 to 300 Massachusetts bridges identified as being in urgent need of repair.

Senate President Therese Murray (D-Plymouth) said: "The Legislature has long supported measures to repair our bridges, and I applaud the Governor for his attention to this serious public safety concern. Our bridges are essential to the operations of daily commerce and travel. By taking action now, we can start to make up for decades of neglect."

The bill also provides for the ongoing maintenance of bridges and will reduce the number of structurally deficient bridges by 15 percent over the next eight years. Additionally, by starting projects now rather than waiting, the Commonwealth will save approximately \$1.5 billion in inflation and deferred maintenance costs while creating new jobs for the economy.

"The bridge collapse in Minnesota was a wake up call to the nation and a tragic reminder of the importance of investing in our infrastructure," said Senator Steven A. Baddour (D-Methuen), Senate Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation. "Years of neglect and inadequate investment in the state's capital assets and infrastructure have resulted in a backlog that has far exceeded available resources. Committing \$3 billion to fund more than 250 structurally-deficient

bridge rehabilitation and prevention projects over the next eight years creates thousands of jobs, improves the safety and condition of our bridge inventory, and generates significant savings for the Commonwealth.”

The \$3 billion in financing for the bridge bill includes \$1.1 billion borrowed against anticipated future federal funding and \$1.9 billion in gas tax bonds to be repaid with existing gas tax revenues.

The Senate continues to review proposals for the Commonwealth to guarantee Massachusetts Turnpike Authority debt.

The bill now goes back to the House of Representatives for further action.

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