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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Senators, Inspector General, introduce post-Big Dig oversight bill**  
*Legislation would require independent owner's representative to oversee major construction projects*

**September 14, 2006, Boston** — Three State Senators and the Inspector General introduced legislation to require new independent oversight on all public construction projects costing at least \$50 million.

Senators Steven Baddour (D-Methuen), Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester) and Marc Pacheco (D-Taunton) and Inspector General Greg Sullivan introduced a bill which would require an owner's representative be hired for all major construction projects estimated to cost at least \$50 million.

“This is a vitally important piece of legislation because it closes a gaping loophole in our construction laws that allowed the managers of the Big Dig to police their own work, a terrible conflict of interest,” Sullivan said. “It is high time for the state to shut the door forever on the mistakes made during the construction of the Central Artery project so we can have confidence in the projects of the future. That confidence will only come if we ensure that independent, seasoned professionals with no conflicts of interest oversee our large public works projects.”

The owner's representative, an independent engineer with at least five year's experience, would represent the state agency or authority in reviewing the quality of major construction projects and recovering costs caused by mismanagement.

“We're creating a formal process for the better management of public projects—and taxpayer's money,” Baddour said. “This bill establishes definitive checks and oversight to keep another Big Dig from happening.”

Owner's representatives are already used on many private construction projects and for public building construction in the Commonwealth estimated at more than \$1.5 million. "The failure of independent oversight on the Central Artery Project has had costly and fatal results," Tarr said. "Our state should never again contemplate a major project without first ensuring citizens the protections they deserve."

The legislation follows, more than two months after the tragic death of Milena Del Valle in a Big Dig tunnel. A multi-ton ceiling panel dropped on Del Valle's car on July 10. Better oversight from an independent owner's representative could possibly have prevented the tragic death.

"Throughout the Big Dig project we have witnessed a disturbing lack of accountability, compromising the integrity of such an important project and casting doubt over the ability of private corporations to manage public contracts while protecting the public interest," Pacheco said. "This is important legislation that seeks to eliminate conflicts in public construction management to ensure the taxpayers of this state are never again subject to the mismanagement that plagued the Big Dig project."

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