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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 4, 2011

COMMITTEES:  
HOMELAND SECURITY  
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SMALL BUSINESS

The Honorable Deval Patrick  
Massachusetts State House  
Office of the Governor, Room 280  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Governor Patrick,

I write today to express serious concern about recent reports that your administration is looking at raising the Massachusetts gas tax as part of a combination of proposals to address transportation funding. This is an issue that I have heard about from many worried constituents.

Right now, gas prices across Massachusetts are averaging around \$3.75 gallon, a dollar higher than last year and not far from the all-time high prices we reached in the summer of 2008.

Massachusetts motorists already pay a higher gas tax than the national average, and with budgets stretched to meet the rising cost of food and other expenses, a further increase in the price of gas would cause real hardship for families.

Higher gas prices will also hurt our efforts to create jobs. I agree with U.S. Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner who in April warned that that high gas prices have "a measurable impact on the economy," and could slow the recovery. President Obama and his administration spoke out earlier this year against raising the federal gas tax, citing the struggling economy and high unemployment numbers. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood said in March that "At this point the president just believes with the economy where it's at, and so many people out of work, it's very difficult to be proposing a gas tax."

Furthermore, our state's economy benefits greatly from tourism during the summer and fall months, and higher prices at the pump would discourage people from driving to their vacation destination.

During the recent debate over the national debt, both political parties in Washington, D.C. came together on a plan that makes significant reductions in spending. It was not easy. But that compromise also protected our most important priorities for working class families and retirees. I believe the answer at the state level has to be the same as the federal response: cut spending, don't raise taxes.

In 2009, as a state senator, I spoke out against a proposed gas tax increase. The State Legislature ultimately rejected the idea because there was a bipartisan consensus that raising taxes would make the economic downturn worse. That remains true today. Higher taxes mean fewer jobs – it's that simple.

Thank you for hearing me out on this matter.

Sincerely,



Scott P. Brown  
United States Senator