



# TOWN OF WATERTOWN

## Environment & Energy Efficiency Committee

Emma Clement, Co-Chair  
Jeanne Trubek, Co-Chair  
Andrew Airasian  
Meredith Fields

Brian Hebeisen  
Edward Lewis, Town Energy Manager  
Lauri Murphy

### To the members of the MassDOT Board and the Fiscal and Management Control Board:

We are very concerned about the MBTA's proposal to replace the route 71 and 73 trolley buses with overnight-charging battery-electric buses. These ONC buses require diesel fuel for heat in cold weather. The current trolley buses are 100% electric, using renewably-generated electricity. This means that the MBTA is proposing that we increase our public transit greenhouse gas emissions, rather than reducing them. This is a step backwards.

The current trolley buses that rely on overhead catenary wires for power should be kept in use, and the proposal to convert the North Cambridge facility to a charging station should be put on hold until a more detailed analysis of alternatives and a larger plan for reducing emissions is applied, including a look at In Motion Charging (IMC) which has the potential to expand electric bus routes and charging without an additional facility. Any plans the MBTA makes must move us towards the required limits set by the Global Warming Solutions Act: that the Commonwealth reach Greenhouse Gas emissions reduction of 25% by 2020 and at least 80% by 2050 below 1990 levels. **Replacing these buses with ONC buses now does nothing to address two goals of the MBTA:** It neither reduces greenhouse emissions, nor does it address issues of environmental justice. Combustion emissions are a major public health hazard. If ONC buses were to replace buses that are currently diesel powered, the net greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced, and the air in these communities would be cleaner. Both decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and improving public health are goals of the Commonwealth. The ONC buses could be used on the #1 bus route from Cambridge to Roxbury and result in a significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions in communities that strongly need these improvements.

We request the analytics and metrics supporting this decision. When the analysis of value of various choices is made, it is imperative at this point that both the environmental costs, such as greenhouse gas emissions, and the public health costs, such as particulate emissions, be included. For too long these issues have not been considered, and we are now paying the price. Please do not be short-sighted and make decisions now that do not include these factors. It would be better to delay a decision a year or so than to rush into a decision that will have devastating long-term results.

Watertown Environment and Energy Efficiency Committee  
Watertown, MA

cc Watertown Town Council  
Assistant Town Manager Steven Magoon  
Watertown Transportation Planner Laura Wiener

Senator William Brownsberger  
Representative Steven Owens  
Representative John Lawn