



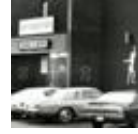
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LETTERS

Cut out federal middleman and give states reins on transportation

| JULY 26, 2014

YOUR JULY 19 editorial “Bipartisan Highway Trust deal reveals dysfunctional Congress” correctly condemns the pervasive, bipartisan dysfunction of Washington, but there is good news: Support is growing for legislation that would cut out the Washington middleman and empower the states to tackle their unique transportation challenges.

State and local governments account for more than 70 percent of highway and transit spending in Massachusetts. Right now, the federal government serves as little more than an expensive pass-through for the remainder of transportation funding. One could compare it to a skimming scheme that enriches and empowers folks in Washington to the detriment of those in Boston.

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Under the Transportation Empowerment Act, the Commonwealth could control roughly 95 percent of all highway and transit spending. As the federal role subsides, states will step in and fund projects in a manner that they see fit, while pursuing projects of their choosing without the strings and costs associated with using federal money for a project. Indeed, states have demonstrated an ability to handle their own affairs quite well. If you're tired of Washington dysfunction and want more innovation and accountability, this measure is a good place to start.

Michael A. Needham