



**Remarks of Chris Osgood, Chief of Streets
Joint Committee on Public Health
June 11, 2019**

As prepared for delivery

Good afternoon, Chairperson Comerford, Chairperson Mahoney, Vice Chairs Collins & Tyler and members of the Joint Committee. I am Chris Osgood; I serve as Mayor Walsh's Chief of Streets. On behalf of the Mayor, it is my pleasure to testify on bill H. 1958 / S. 1207 that we believe will help lower emissions, address congestion, and improve public health in the Commonwealth.

Today in Boston, 25% of our emissions -- roughly two million tons of CO₂ -- are emitted annually from tailpipes of cars and trucks. This has an impact on everything from asthma rates to sea level rise.

One of the tools we have to manage tailpipe emissions is the authority granted in the 1970s to our Air Pollution Control Commission. This Commission manages the number of commercial parking spaces in certain areas of the City including Downtown, South Boston and East Boston. It also allows the Commission to charge a fee to administer this program. That fee is currently \$10 per space per year, but only on spaces in South Boston.

This legislation before you updates the existing the authority we have to better align it with the growth of our city -- and other municipalities in the Commonwealth -- over the last 45 years.

First, it broadens the areas where Boston can assess a per space fee to include any commercial parking space in the City; this is important as we see growth in areas currently outside of the parking freeze and don't think it makes sense to assess a fee solely on spaces in South Boston.

Second, it broadens the type of investments that can be made with that fee to include programs that can further improve transportation or reduce emissions.

Third, it allows us to lower or waive that per space fee if that space supports electric vehicle charging, which will help us incentivize the infrastructure that will lower emissions.

Importantly, it does these things while preserving the public process for setting fees or adjusting any caps -- a process handled through the Air Pollution Control Commission in Boston and any similar Board of Health in other Municipalities.

Any funds collected through this program would encourage improved mobility and the use of clean fuels. For example: the City would work with major employers to encourage the use of the T and install EV Chargers in their garages, and funds could also be used to improve bus service to major employment centers by installing exclusive bus lanes on key corridors.

We appreciate your interest in this bill, your work to improve public health, and we welcome your questions.