

# Press Release



## ***We Need High-Quality Commuter Rail Service***

Pioneer Institute commends Transportation Secretary Jeff Mullan and MBTA General Manager Richard Davey for considering a long-term contract model for the state's commuter rail service. At a hearing yesterday, Mullan and Davey faced lawmakers' questions concerning the failure to provide timely, reliable service this winter.

Pioneer has long advocated the long-term contract approach as a way to give incentives to the operator to make infrastructure investments. Pioneer's Research Director Steve Poftak and co-author John Miller restated this recommendation in recent *Boston Globe* op-ed ("[Commuter rail-off track](#)" March 30, 2011). Poftak and Miller noted that the alternatives to this approach, either letting another short-term contract or bringing commuter rail service under state control, would continue to lead to the same quality of service we have seen in recent years or would expand "the public sector workforce by thousands and end the conversation about accountability."

Dr. Miller, a former MIT professor, explored the potential of longer-term contracts and public-private partnerships in 2008 Pioneer Institute white paper, [Life Cycle Delivery of Public Infrastructure](#).

In a follow-up white paper, [Lessons Learned: An Assessment of Select Public-Private Partnerships in Massachusetts](#), he reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of recent partnerships in Massachusetts, including the commuter rail contract.

Pioneer's sustained focus on strategy, infrastructure modernization and high-quality transportation services recognizes that we must address a multi-billion-dollar backlog of projects that is every bit as daunting as paying down our public pension liabilities. It also recognizes the fact that high quality transportation is critical to our economic vitality and quality of life. To learn more about Pioneer Institute's Center for Better Government initiatives and transportation policy research, click here [more »](#)

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