

AAA Update

Important Massachusetts News and Analysis

A MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNOR-ELECT

→ Congratulations go out to Governor-Elect William Weld on his hard fought victory. During the campaign, Mr. Weld showed a strong interest in transportation issues and the problems the state faces in meeting its infrastructure needs. The most significant problem is that over the past two years the outgoing administration has placed road and bridge projects at the absolute bottom of the barrel on its list of priorities. Between November of 1988 and this past summer, the state's Highway Fund took in about a billion dollars but didn't put out one road or bridge contract! And since the gas tax increase of this past summer, the office of Administration and Finance has found a way to chisel away at \$120 million in dedicated road funds (see the \$120 Million Mirage, below) so that only about \$7 million is actually available for roadwork! If AAA can get one and only one message across to the new Governor it's this — the time has come to re-establish the repair of our state's roads and bridges as the Highway Fund's number one priority.

STICKING IT TO THE MOTORIST

The new federal deficit reduction package will raise \$165 billion over the next five years. \$38 billion of which will be paid by the traveling public. The Federal gas tax goes from 9 to 14 cents per gallon, the airline ticket tax from 8 to 10 percent — not including a new airport head tax that will cost up to \$12 dollars per ticket — and increased luxury and gas guzzler taxes. The package spells out very clearly how much of the new revenue goes for deficit reduction — but what isn't clear is how much, if any, of this money, or of the existing \$20 billion in various transportation trust funds will be spent on transportation needs.

TESTING THE TRUCKERS

Truck, bus and other commercial drivers will soon face stricter licensing standards. The registry is implementing the Commercial Drivers License (CDL) Act which intensifies enforcement of the trucking industry. By April 1992, all of the state's 270,000 commercial drivers will be retested using enhanced written and hands-on tests. CDL will also require that only a single license be issued by the home state — so drivers can't spread multiple violations among different state licenses. If a driver is convicted of two or more serious violations, commercial driving privileges will be lost for life.

THE \$120 MILLION MIRAGE

~~What can you buy with \$120 million? Not much if you're the State Department of Public Works. When the gas tax was increased last summer, \$120 million of the new revenue was appropriated directly to the DPW. The money was supposed to be used as cash to leverage federal matching funds for road and bridge projects. But after the Executive Office of Administration and Finance moved in with a dazzling series of cuts, transfers, and reallocations — not to mention "freezing" \$89 million to help offset the deficit — only \$7.4 million of the original \$120 million remained. The state now says that since it no longer has the cash, it'll have to borrow the money needed for road work. We can only hope that with a new administration those "frozen" funds will be thawed out and spread over our roads.~~

7.4 M

AAA HAS NEW TOLL-FREE NUMBERS

We have new, toll-free numbers for all AAA services. See page 21 for a clip-and-save listing of the new numbers.