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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

TO: Massachusetts Department of Transportation
FROM: Chief George J. DiBlasi
Director of Governmental Affairs
Massachusetts Fraternal Order of Police
DATE: May 20, 2008
RE: Public Hearing: Use of police Details and Flaggers

The position of MA Fraternal Order of Police on the issue of utilizing Flaggers to replace Police Details at construction sites is; we are in strong opposition to the concept. The proposal that this change will help Massachusetts save a great deal of money is without merit or foundation. The proposed savings of \$5,000,000 a year by using Flagmen rather than trained Police Officers is a minuscule amount of money to be saved at the cost of Public Safety, and no one is sure of that figure. It is absurd to replace Police Officers at construction sites utilizing Flagmen, if you must pay Flaggers the Union Laborers prevailing wages which is very close to what you are paying a trained sworn police officer to do the same job. Every time Police officers are assigned to work construction details in MA, what you are getting is hundreds of police officers working daily on the streets in Massachusetts. These officers are also available to enforce traffic laws, catch criminals and render first aid to citizens as a secondary duty while working construction details. In fact last year the BPD arrested three out of four Bank Robbers while on detail assignments in the downtown area of Boston. These are only a few of numerous incidents were police detail officers have utilized their training and powers as a police officer to enhance public safety while assigned to a police detail. Do you think having a Flagman at a construction site would catch a bank robber, arrest a bad guy, or render first aid to a citizen? I think not! Do you think an angry or frustrated motorist is going to obey the hand signals of a Flagman directing traffic at a construction site? I think not! Who do you think would be a deterrent to a House Break or a Burglary on a secondary road construction site a Flagman or a Police Officer? If you believe in the patrol tactic of omnipresence you know the answer to that one! The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is presently under sever budget constrains state wide, police departments are short handed and facing cuts in personnel. By placing Flagmen at construction sites we will be literally taking hundreds of trained police officers off the street daily and replacing them with laborers at little or no financial savings to the community, doesn't sound like a great idea to me but you would probably consider that opinion bias not based on decades of law enforcement experience.

Respectfully Submitted