GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES CONTRACT AWARD FOR SOUTH COAST RAIL LINE BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS

NEW BEDFORD – Monday, November 24, 2014 – Governor Deval Patrick today joined Acting MassDOT Secretary and CEO Frank DePaola and local officials to announce a contract award for the replacement of four bridges in New Bedford and Fall River along the future South Coast Rail Line. The improvements will advance South Coast Rail while providing immediate benefit to the active freight operations in the region.

“Residents of the South Coast have been waiting for 20 years for a reliable transit system that connects conveniently to Boston and everything in between,” said Governor Patrick. “These infrastructure investments will help us make it happen.”

As part of the early action projects associated with the South Coast Rail Project, the $42 million project will replace three Fall River bridges and the Wamsutta Bridge in New Bedford. The contract for the bridge replacement work was awarded to Cardi Corporation.

“Today’s announcement means we are one step closer to having South Coast Rail become a reality,” said Congressman Bill Keating. “We all know the countless benefits that South Coast Rail will bring to our communities, most importantly, it’s contribution to the economic vitality of our historic South Coast. I applaud Governor Patrick for his continued support of this project and thank him for his ongoing commitment to making Massachusetts a great place to live and work.”

In June, the MassDOT Board of Directors approved a contract award of $210 million over 10 years to the joint venture of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB)/HNTB) Corporation. The contract officially moved the South Coast Rail project from planning to construction. The Board granted $12 million in first year funding to begin program management, early design development and environmental permitting, with additional awards in succeeding years up to the contract limit of $210 million.

The bridge replacement project announced today is in addition to the 10-year South Coast Rail contract. The four rail bridges along the South Coast Rail right of way to be replaced include the President Avenue, Brownell Avenue, and Golf Club Road Bridges in Fall River and the three-span Wamsutta Bridge in New Bedford. In addition, a separate MBTA contract will completely upgrade five grade crossings located on Dean
Street in Taunton; Copicut Road, Elm and High Streets in Freetown; and Nash Road in New Bedford.

“Having been a leading advocate for the creation of South Coast Rail for many years, the rebuilding of these bridges represents a major milestone in bringing this project to fruition,” said Senator Mark Montigny. “I applaud the efforts of the Patrick administration in awarding these contracts and making the realization of a South Coast rail that much closer to reality. We must continue to be vigilant as so much more remains to be done. Those of us who have fought so hard for funding to ensure this project gets the outcome it deserves know there are still hurdles to clear, but are feeling ever confident the effort we’ve put in was not in vain’.

“I’d like to thank the Patrick Administration for taking some more major steps towards bringing South Coast Rail to the Commonwealth,” said Senator Marc R. Pacheco. “Southeastern Massachusetts residents have long awaited the economic and tourism opportunities this important transportation project promises the region; we must keep moving forward with contract awards like these to make sure South Coast Rail stays on track as we transition to the next administration.”

“This demonstrable progress on these early action projects related to SouthCoast Rail is heartening for the entire region,” said Senator Michael J. Rodrigues. “I am grateful to the Administration for ensuring these early steps are done in an effective and timely manner, so that SouthCoast Rail can proceed without delay. I cannot overstate the importance of SouthCoast Rail for the region’s accessibility and prosperity, and I am so pleased to see this project moving along.”

“I’m glad that the Administration is making the necessary investments in bridges that will immediately benefit freight transportation,” said Representative Antonio F.D. Cabral. “I will continue to work to ensure that this investment will also one day benefit South Coast Rail.”

“I’m pleased that the Wamsutta Railroad bridge replacement project is about to begin, as this is an important bridge for rail travel and transport,” said Representative Bill Straus. “Replacement of the bridges is a significant step in bringing South Coast Rail to the region.”

“I am pleased the Patrick administration is continuing to address Southcoast rail needs with the awarding of this contract to replace the Wamsutta rail bridge,” said Representative Bob Koczera. “The Wamsutta bridge replacement is necessary for the safe operation of freight service and the anticipated restoration of passenger rail service to New Bedford.”

"The Governor’s commitment to SCR is once again exemplified by putting money where his mouth is,” said Representative Christopher Markey. “We in the Southcoast owe a great deal of thanks to Governor Patrick for getting us one step closer to this project being completed. I will certainly be forever grateful.”
“The commencement of South Coast rail construction will be one of Governor Patrick's most enduring legacies and it will be generational in its impact,” said Representative Paul Schmid.

“The replacement of the Wamsutta Bridge is not just a critical step on the road to passenger rail service, it is a strategic investment in the Port of New Bedford,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “Cargo activity in our Port is already rapidly increasing, and a new Wamsutta Bridge will enable us to grow our freight operations even faster in the years ahead. I appreciate all that Governor Patrick, Secretary DePaola, and former Secretary Davey have done to advance this project.”

All early-action projects will be completed over the next two years while ongoing preliminary engineering design work continues on the overall South Coast Rail project.

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