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January 23, 2001

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Governor
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
State House
Office of the Governor, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133
via telecopier (617) 727-9725

RE: The Sale of Naming Rights to Four T Stations

Dear Governor Celluci:

According to news accounts, your Secretary of Transportation, Kevin Sullivan, intends to sell to corporations the right to put their names on four Boston subway "T" stations.

This is a hucksterism that degrades history and community in favor of crass commercialism. No other city is so identified with the birth of American liberty. No other American city is so rich with history. Once you start selling off the names of history, where will it end? When you rename the Harvard Square T stop for McDonalds?

A sense of place is a disappearing resource in America today. The corporate focus of globalization is turning every moment of our days, and every nook and cranny of our lives into something for sale. The language of civic places is a last bulwark against this trend. People say they will meet at Park Street station and walk down to Quincy Market or the Garden, and there is a sense of comfort and continuity that is all too rare today.

Already, people have to say they are going to the "Fleet Center." Now will they meet at Mirage Resorts Place or Pfizer Square to go there? Will Quincy Market become the Monsanto Market or Philip Morris Market, when the price is right?

Consider the indignity to citizens to have their local place names usurped by polluters, corporate welfare recipients, tortfeasors and corporate felons. For example, Denver's Coors Field is named after the Adolph Coors Company, which paid a \$200,000 criminal fine and pled guilty to two criminal misdemeanor counts of contaminating groundwater and failing to report the contamination to regulatory authorities.

Consider the affront to those fighting obesity, say, to have a contributor to that obesity -- Burger King, say -- put its name on the T station which they pass every day. A Back Bay Budweiser station would sanction beer blasts and alcoholism. Downtown Crossing Novartis station would lend encouragement to the overmedication of our children with Ritalin.

These are not merely hypothetical concerns. Take sports arenas, for example. Vancouver's General Motors Place celebrates a corporation which, among other things, sells more pornography through its DirecTV subsidiary than does Larry Flint, owner of the Hustler pornography empire, according to *The New York Times*. Denver's Pepsi Center promotes excessive consumption of soda pop, which may contribute to obesity, tooth decay, osteoporosis, heart disease and kidney stones, according to "Liquid Candy: How Soft Drinks are Harming Americans' Health," a report by the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

Americans are already deluged with advertising. It should not be the role of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to set new high water marks in the annals of aggressive commercialism. Not everything should be for sale. Let's have some statesmanship!

Sincerely,

Ralph Nader