

August 4, 2020

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, House of Representatives
1236 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

Public transit systems face a four-alarm emergency as a result of COVID-19. We appreciate the passage by the House of the HEROES Act and the understanding of the urgent need for more emergency transit funding that it represents. But it is now apparent that the proposed HEROES funding will be insufficient. Nationwide transit systems have a combined shortfall of at least \$32 billion. CARES Act and local transit funding for many systems will run out within the next five months and for some, it runs out as soon as August 1st. We urgently request at least \$32 billion in additional, targeted, emergency operating support for public transit systems across the country to continue to safely provide essential services.

The public health crisis continues to have a devastating impact on public transit. Agencies are suffering tremendous losses in ridership and farebox revenue, as well as state and local revenues. Simultaneously, they are taking on new expenses to clean equipment and provide personal protective equipment, as well as leave for sick workers. With CARES Act support running out, agencies are already beginning to make plans for cuts including laying off workers, shutting down bus and train lines, and halting needed capital improvements and expansions. Once these service cuts are made, some of them will become permanent.(1) CARES Act money is likely to run out before the end of 2020 in Seattle, Los Angeles, the Bay Area, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Boston Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Salt Lake City among other cities.(2) In New York City, it runs by the end of this month.(3) Without additional emergency operating support for public transit now, service will be cut, cleaning and PPE will be reduced, and the economic consequences will be devastating.

There are 2.8 million essential workers who depend on public transit to ensure the well-being of US cities during this pandemic.(4) It is imperative that we maintain transit service at a frequency which ensures that essential personnel and transit workers have space for social distancing. Transit workers have been hard hit by COVID-19, and continue to require costly PPE and proper health and safety. This emergency funding is necessary to provide rigorous cleaning, sanitizing, and safe operating procedures as well as essential transportation services.

Tens of millions of people in the US rely on public transit to get to work every day, generating trillions of dollars in economic activity. Every dollar invested in transit offers a five-to-one return and every \$1 billion invested produces 49,700 jobs.(5) Transit agencies are often among the largest employers in their cities, and those jobs are at risk. At least 30,000 manufacturing and 30,000 construction jobs will be lost without additional funding due to the cancellation of transit capital projects(6)— total job losses could be in the hundreds of thousands. The economies of our metropolitan areas, which play an outsized role in driving the nation's economy, are heavily dependent on public transit. Without Congressional investment in preserving transit service for essential workers today, there will be no economic recovery.

Investing in public transit is also an investment in racial justice because it is essential to the economic well-being of communities of color. Sixty percent of transit riders are people of color.(7) Yet over the past several decades, the federal investment in transportation has consistently neglected public transit. The systemic racism of mass transit disinvestment needs to stop. Black and Latinx workers are disproportionately

represented among essential workers and are less likely to be able to work at home than their white counterparts.(8) Failure to provide needed emergency funding for public transit will dramatically impair the ability of many communities of color to work, meet family needs, and protect their health when their communities are being disproportionately hit by the pandemic.

We also need to make sure that our vital paratransit services, which take riders to jobs and health care, are operating fully throughout this crisis and beyond. Paratransit provides a transportation lifeline to millions of people with disabilities who rely on it to get to work, go shopping, and meet their health needs. While there is more that needs to be done, our public transit systems have made significant progress in providing accessible transportation. This progress is at risk without the needed emergency funds.

In the midst of this pandemic, our transit systems provide a lifeline to our communities and our economy. They are facing unprecedented fiscal crisis and are at risk of dramatic service cuts. Many transit systems are running short of money right now and more will run short in the next few months. Without the necessary emergency federal transit relief, the consequences will be dire.

For these reasons, we urge you to provide at least \$32 billion in additional, targeted, emergency operating support for public transit systems across the country. The HEROES Act targeted the largest metropolitan areas, which have tremendous unfunded needs. Public transit agencies across the country in many small and mid-size communities also remain underfunded and require urgent assistance. The \$32 Billion should be targeted, based upon need, to sustain all underfunded transit systems.

We look forward to working with you as you shape relief legislation.

Sincerely,

350 Brooklyn
350 Massachusetts
Acadia Center
Active Transportation Alliance
ALIGN (NY)
Alliance for a Just Society
Alliance for Community Transit - LA
Alliance for Quality Education
America Walks
American Institute of Architects New York
Arkansas Community Organizations
Artist's Laboratory Theatre
Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living
Barbara A Coe & Assoc.
Better Bus Coalition
Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation (BEST)
Bike Austin
Bike Durham
Bike/Walk Central Florida
Bikemore
Business for a Better Portland
CASA
Catalyst Miami
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Empowered Politics
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
Center for Neighborhood Technology

Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Sustainable Communities/VAGND Sustainable Cities and Transportation Working Group
Center for Transportation and the Environment
Central Florida Jobs with Justice
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
CFL4Transit (Central Floridians for Public Transit)
Chinese Progressive Association (SF)
Church WORLD SERVICE
Circulate San Diego
Citizen Action of New York
City of Beaverton
Civic Design Center
Clean Water Action
Cleveland City Council
Clevelanders for Public Transit
Climate Action Campaign
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Coalition for Smarter Growth
Cobb Chamber of Commerce
Connecticut League of Conservation Voters
CrossTown Connect TMA
CT Energy Network/CT Clean Water Fund
CT Sustainable Business Council
Denver Streets Partnership
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)
Earth Day Mobile Bay, Inc.
EarthSong Photography
Efficiency For All
Environmental Health Coalition
Equiticity
Faith in Indiana
Families for Safe Streets
Farm&City
Florida Student Power Network
Food AND Medicine/Transportation For All
Foundation For Regional Transit/Friends of Caltrain
Friends of SMART
Fulton County Supervisor
Greater Ohio Policy Center
Greater Prince William Climate Action Network
Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association
Green For All
Green New Deal VA
GreenFaith
Greenpeace USA
HoCo Climate Action
Hoosier Environmental Council
IDEAS For Us
InAdvance
Indy Chamber
Intelligent Transportation Society of America
Investing in Place
Jobs to Move America

Jobs With Justice
Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance
League of American Bicyclists
League of Women Voters of the United States
LINK Houston
LivableStreets Alliance
Long Island Rail Road Commuter Council
Madison Area Bus Advocates
Main Street Alliance
Maine People's Alliance
Make the Road New Jersey
Malone Complete Streets Advisory Board
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Metro-North Commuter Council
Metropolitan Planning Council
MHAAction
Miami Riders Alliance
Mid-City CAN (Community Advocacy Network)
Midlands Transit Riders Association
Mile High Connects
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce
Morningside Gardens Green Committee for Environmental Sustainability
Motor City Freedom Riders
Move LA
Move Minnesota
Municipal Art Society of New York
Nashville Civic Design Center
National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)
Native Organizers Alliance
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
New Florida Majority
New Georgia Project Action Fund
New York City Environmental Justice Alliance
New York City Transit Riders Council
New York Communities for Change
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
New York League of Conservation Voters
North Brooklyn Neighbors
Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition
NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign
Office of Councilmember Ty Stober, City of Vancouver
One Fair Wage
One Pennsylvania
OneAmerica
Operation Fuel
Oregon Metro
Organize Florida
Our Streets Minneapolis
Palmetto Cycling Coalition
Partnership for Smarter Growth
People Organized for Westside Renewal

People's Action
Phoenix Finance
Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group
Pittsburghers for Public Transit
PIVOT Architecture
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Public Advocates Inc.
Race Forward
Regional Plan Association
Reinvent Albany
Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce
Respiratory Health Association
RI Transit Riders
Ride New Orleans
Riders Alliance (NY)
RVA Rapid Transit
SA for Equity
San Francisco Transit Riders
SanDiego350
Seamless Bay Area
SEIU Florida
Shared-Use Mobility Center
Sierra Club
Southern Environmental Law Center
SPUR
Street Vendor Project/ Urban Justice Center
Streetsmart Planning
StreetsPAC
Strycker's Bay Neighborhood Council
Sustain Charlotte
Tarrant Transit Alliance
Tenderloin Housing Clinic
Tennessee Citizen Action
Transit Alliance (Tennessee)
Transit Alliance Miami
Transit for Connecticut
Transit Forward Philadelphia
Transit Now Nashville
TransitMatters
Transport Hartford Academy at the Center for Latino Progress
Transportation Choices Coalition
Transportation for America
Transportation for Massachusetts
Transportation Riders United (TRU)
Transportation Working Group, 350Mass.
Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Union of Concerned Scientists
Unite Oregon
UP-STAND
Valley Regional Transit
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia Organizing
Virginians for High Speed Rail

WakeUP Wake County
Walk Austin
Walk Bike Nashville
WalkBoston
Washington Area Bicyclist Association
Windsor Climate Action
Wisconsin Transit Rider's Alliance
Working Families Party

Sources

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