

May XYZ, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United State Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, and
Minority Leader Schumer:

Thank you for your leadership and support for public transit by providing desperately needed resources in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. That emergency operating support has enabled public transit to continue connecting essential workers with jobs, health care, and food sources, while also helping to protect the essential frontline public transit workforce. Unfortunately, as the impact of this public health crisis has become more clear, so has the budgetary impact on public transit agencies. **We therefore urge you to provide an additional \$32 billion in emergency operational support for urban and rural public transit in the next economic stimulus or infrastructure legislation. We further request an additional \$20 billion through the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) and urge any supplemental support for State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) maintain or expand existing suballocation requirements, ensuring that local communities will have the resources necessary to support transit service and make necessary improvements to community transportation in response to COVID-19.**

This crisis has demonstrated clearly that public transit is an essential service, connecting millions of people to their jobs in healthcare, grocery stores, and other essential businesses. In fact, 36 percent of transit riders during regular times are workers in essential industries, such as nurses and medical technicians. A long-term economic recovery will be nearly impossible without transit service to help people get back to work after this unprecedented crisis subsides.

Promoting our economic recovery will require additional support for public transit. On May 6th, 15 of the nation's largest transit agencies wrote that, "a fuller picture has now emerged of the depth and breadth of COVID-19-fueled revenue losses from dedicated transportation revenue streams, such as farebox, sales taxes, motor fuel taxes, tolls, mortgage-related taxes and other user fees...Our systems will not be able to support the

regions we serve without replenishing those losses.” The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) estimates that an additional \$32 billion¹ will be necessary to maintain service through the remainder of FY20 and FY21. This funding must be allocated to prioritize the hardest hit agencies, and address issues unique to both urban and rural communities and systems. This emergency funding, at a 100 percent federal share will enable urban and rural transit systems to continue to provide essential service. While we appreciate the \$15.75 billion provided by the HEROES Act, this funding will not fully address the need beyond FY20, and we urge you to provide the \$32 billion necessary to sustain service.

We must further ensure transit agencies and local governments have the flexibility to invest in their transportation networks to address the demand for connectivity to transit, specifically biking and walking infrastructure. Local communities are responding to current needs by reallocating space on city streets to accommodate meal delivery services and to provide adequate space for people to travel or exercise while social distancing. The crisis has changed how people need to move through their communities and it is critical that local communities have the resources necessary to support a safe and healthy environment for their citizens today, and an economic recovery tomorrow. As Congress considers supplemental funding for State DOTs and infrastructure, we therefore urge you to provide an additional \$20 billion through STBGP, with operating and capital funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects made available through the Transportation Alternatives program at a comparable share of any increase to the larger program, and ensure that State DOT revenues are treated as federal revenue and are sub allocated to local communities.

Thank you for your leadership and support for public transit. We look forward to working together to support a healthy and prosperous future.

Sincerely,

Beth Osborne
Director, Transportation for America

And

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

Cc:

Chairman Mike Crapo, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Ranking Member Sherrod Brown, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Chairman Richard Shelby, Senate Committee on Appropriations

¹ <http://www.mta.info/press-release/mta-headquarters/mta-leads-coalition-15-us-public-transportation-agencies-%E2%80%93-who>

Ranking Member Pat Leahy, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Chairman Peter DeFazio, House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Ranking Member Sam Graves, House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Chairwoman Nita Lowey, House Committee on Appropriations
Ranking Member Kay Granger, House Committee on Appropriations
Members of the Senate
Members of the House