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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Coalition of National Public Transportation Agencies Call on Congress to Deliver Up to \$36 Billion in Federal Aid at Virtual Rally as U.S. Senate Considers COVID-19 Package

Diverse Coalition from New York, Austin, Cleveland, Denver, Jacksonville, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, New Jersey, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle and Others Request Urgent Action to Fund the Lifeblood of the National Economy, Mass Transit

Agencies Represented in Letter to Senate Leadership Account for 44 Percent of the Metropolitan Gross Domestic Product, Move Almost 20 million Americans Daily

Video of Virtual Rally Featuring Agencies from Across the Nation Available [Here](#)

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), today held a virtual rally with Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works (Miami-Dade Transit), Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (L.A. Metro), Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), Southeast Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), Sound Transit, New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA), New Jersey Transit (NJT), Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD), San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Capital Metro to call on Congress to urgently deliver up to \$36 billion in federal aid to public transportation systems nationwide as the U.S. Senate returns to Washington to debate the next coronavirus relief package. A joint letter from a diverse coalition of 27 transportation agencies, including those in the rally, was sent to U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer.

The MTA is facing an unprecedented financial catastrophe amid precipitous declines to fare revenue and local, state and regional taxes that support operations. The agency has been losing \$700-800 million in revenue per month versus budget. With federal funding from the CARES Act set to run out in days, the agency has requested an additional \$3.9 billion in emergency aid to get through the rest of this year, with additional needs in 2021.

"We all need Congress to act now and to act decisively so our systems can survive and support the nation's economic recovery," said **Patrick J. Foye, MTA Chairman and CEO**. "That's why we are asking – insisting – that the Senate set aside \$32-36 billion for transit in the next COVID-19 emergency relief bill to offset the economic harm done by this crisis to our industry."

"COVID-19 has created a fiscal crisis that threatens public transit in the Bay Area. We are doing all we can to build back rider confidence, but need additional funding to ensure the best service possible for those whom public transit is the only option," said **Robert M. Powers, General Manager, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit**.

"While our expenses are going up, our revenue is falling. We appreciate the CARES Act funding, but we need more in order to keep our county and the city of Los Angeles moving," said **Phillip A. Washington, CEO, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority**. "We have our work cut out for us and we need help from Congress."

"COVID-19 has compelled us to become more agile, innovative, customer-focused and strategic," said **Dr. Floun'say Caver, Acting General Manager and CEO, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority**. "I am excited about the future of public transit in this post-COVID environment, but I still urge federal legislators and administrators to prioritize transit funding in the next COVID-19 bill."

"Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, SEPTA has provided critical service to ensure that medical and other essential workers can get to their jobs and that residents can obtain live-sustaining services. However, the challenges facing SEPTA will require additional federal support beyond the full amount of CARES funding," said **Leslie S. Richards, General Manager, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority**.

"Commuters need Sound Transit more than ever to reach their jobs at hospitals, airports, manufacturing and other essential services," said **Peter Rogoff, CEO, Sound Transit**. "The only way Sound Transit will be able to move people and help the economy is if the next federal response to COVID-19 is focused on replenishing the revenues that are disappearing all around us."

"In New Orleans, we rely heavily upon tourism and conventions coming to town, and we have seen a significant drop in revenue that will have dire consequences if this continues into 2021 and we don't address it now," said **Alex Wiggins, CEO, New Orleans Regional Transit Authority**. "It is absolutely critical that Congress acts to provide additional funding moving forward."

"Like every other transit agency, NJ TRANSIT is on the front lines of this pandemic. The extraordinary measures we have taken to protect our employees and riders come with extraordinary costs. NJ TRANSIT has come through for its community and economy since the onset of the pandemic, and we need Congress to come through for us again," said **Kevin Corbett, President and CEO, NJ TRANSIT**.

"Our brave, frontline employees have continued to provide thousands of essential workers with the critical transportation options that they rely on to get to their jobs when they had no other choice. But as this pandemic continues, it is clear that a one-time allocation will not be enough to sustain us into the

next year and beyond, so I urge Congress to build upon the momentum from the CARES Act," said **Nathaniel Ford, CEO of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority**.

"As the number of cases in Miami continues to rise, our ridership has not gone down. It is clear that our riders need public transportation to get to their jobs, but the COVID-19 pandemic has still had a negative economic impact. Without additional federal funding, we will not be able to provide this service into the future," said **Alice N. Bravo, Director, Miami-Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works**.

"Further federal assistance is necessary as our ridership comes back and we continue protect our riders and employees by purchasing additional PPE and equipping trains and buses with the latest cleaning and filtering equipment. The funding is needed – and needed now," said **Paul J. Ballard, CEO and General Manager, Denver Regional Transportation District**.

"The city of Austin is growing rapidly, and transit is a huge part of the solution to issues like congestion that the city faces. Federal support is necessary so we are able to help our community gain access to jobs, education and healthcare," said **Randy Clarke, President & CEO, CapitalMetro of Austin, Tex.**

The full text of the letter is available below.

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

Thanks to your leadership, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) provided \$25 billion to transit agencies. With those critical funds, agencies have been able to safely move millions of essential workers to and from the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic, even as ridership plummeted and revenue streams diminished. Now, as our economy begins to recover, financial pressures brought on by the public health crisis continue to threaten our ability to provide service and keep our country working. We are requesting your help once again to include in the next COVID-19 relief bill \$32 - \$36 billion in additional funding for the public transportation industry and the workers we serve to cover COVID-related costs and revenue losses through 2021.

Together, our regions account for 44 percent of the metropolitan gross domestic product, and we move almost 20 million Americans daily. The mobility we provide is crucial to the function of our nation's economy. Our transit systems collectively move millions of students throughout the school year and are responsible for getting millions more people to work every day. For many, public transit is the only link to major medical centers and health care providers. Without additional federal assistance, many of our agencies will be forced to make difficult decisions that will negatively impact the lives of essential workers and the returning workforce.

While the initial CARES Act funding allows us to keep trains and buses running today, the funding will not sustain us through this protracted crisis, the breadth and depth of which is still unknown. As state and local tax revenues that many agencies rely on continue to fall, some transit systems may be forced to lay off the workers who have operated the systems through the pandemic. Others are considering cutting or even curtailing service just when the public needs transit to get back to work and school.

In addition, several transit systems are halting on-going or delaying shovel ready capital projects that can sustain our economy during the pandemic and help us in the recovery. Investments in transit infrastructure generate four dollars of economic activity for every dollar invested and create a supply chain that touches all 50 states and the national job market. Capital spending will be critical to broad economic recovery, and additional federal aid will help these agencies maintain vital infrastructure projects.

Our country will not experience a full recovery if the transit systems that move our economy are not fully functional. We need federal support for public transportation in the next relief package to secure transit's future and the nation's economy.