

December 15, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Speaker Pelosi,

On behalf of the undersigned regional organizations representing local governments and tens of millions of residents across U.S. metropolitan areas, we urge you to take immediate action to provide emergency funding to ensure public transit agencies can continue to serve as vital lifelines in their communities.

As the country continues to battle the health and economic impacts of the pandemic, transit systems in cities across the nation are suffering a major strain on the revenue sources necessary for continued operations, including farebox revenue and sales taxes. Meanwhile, millions of Americans continue to rely on transit – including many frontline medical workers and other essential workers. We urge you to support near-term federal transit investments to help forestall what will otherwise be catastrophic cuts in transit service. Such cuts will harm the safety and reliability of transit service in our communities, negatively impact the economies of our regions, and make recovery harder once the economy begins to reopen.

We urge you to support the following federal investment to support our respective metropolitan regions and the nation's transportation system:

- **\$32 Billion in Emergency Federal Funds for Transit Agencies** as requested by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA): With unprecedented drops in ridership and losses in revenue transit agencies nationally need \$32 billion in emergency funds to avoid damaging service and jobs cuts and minimize economic hardship. With CARES Act funding running out, transit agencies will be forced to cut transit service and furlough or lay off workers or redistribute capital funds, intended for repairs and expansion, to bolster operating budgets. Either option is unacceptable and damaging both to ridership and the broader economy of our regions. Transit systems cannot wait until the new year for these funds, and we strongly encourage Congress to include funds in a COVID relief package before the end of 2020.

A strong transportation network will be crucial to helping our communities recover as we begin to emerge from the shutdowns and other impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Transit systems are a vital piece of the transportation networks in our regions, and they require federal support during these unprecedented times to keep them operating until riders return in larger numbers. Letting these systems fail or requiring significant cutbacks in service and maintenance will create a situation that will take years from which to recover.

We look forward to working with you to support transportation investments that will help our transit systems in the short term to support economic stability and equitable transportation choices for years to come. We commend your leadership as you work to ensure our communities and transportation systems receive the support they need. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further with your staff.

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Chuck Bean, Executive Director, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments at cbean@mwkog.org.

Sincerely,

Atlanta Regional Commission

Capitol Region Council of Governments (Hartford)

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (Philadelphia)

Houston-Galveston Area Council

MetroPlan Orlando

Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Boston)

Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments (San Francisco)

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (Washington, D.C.)

Mid-America Regional Council (Kansas City)

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (Columbus)

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (Cleveland)

Puget Sound Regional Council (Seattle)

Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (Las Vegas)

San Diego Association of Governments

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (Detroit)

Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (Milwaukee)

Southern California Association of Governments (Los Angeles)

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (Pittsburgh)

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

Wasatch Front Regional Council (Salt Lake City)