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

As both chambers work on additional stimulus measures to mitigate the severe economic disruption caused by COVID-19, including financial assistance to impacted industries, we write to urge you to keep in mind the needs of public transit agencies and their workforce. After coordinating with agencies around the country, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has determined that $16.0 billion for operational costs is needed to sustain the financial viability of our country’s transit systems.

This immediate financial need is due to a dramatic decrease in ridership, corresponding decreases in farebox revenue, and increasing costs for cleaning supplies and protocols -- all directly associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Even with decreased ridership, transit agencies must remain in operation so people can access food, doctors, pharmacies, jobs, and childcare. Those most reliant on public transportation include communities of color, low-income communities, and people with significant cognitive and physical disabilities that use paratransit services.

Further, financial support for transit agencies must be available to cover operational needs rather than capital investments. The Federal Transit Administration’s increased flexibility in using capital investment funds is helpful only in the short-term. Ultimately, using capital funds to cover operational costs will only increase maintenance backlogs and negatively impact the safety and viability of our transit systems. Additionally, protections must be put in place so that decreased ridership does not negatively impact transit agencies due to federal funding formulas that are based on a previous year’s ridership totals.
The need of our transit agencies is urgent -- not just for those that depend on its services -- but for the hundreds of thousands of people the industry employs including contract workers. We must act to prevent a degradation in service and a loss of jobs that could take years to recover from. We look forward to working together to support this critical transportation industry. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

ADDITIONAL SIGNATORIES

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Jan Schakowsky
Anthony G. Brown
Barbara Lee
Marcia L. Fudge
Alan Lowenthal
Gerald E. Connolly
Tim Ryan
Ayanna Pressley
Cindy Axne
Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Mark Pocan
Joaquin Castro
Lori Trahan
Adriano Espaillat
Grace F. Napolitano
Mike Quigley
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Julia Brownley
Rick Larsen
Stephen Lynch
Bobby L. Rush
James P. McGovern
Andy Levin

Jennifer Wexton
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Raúl Grijalva
Eddie Bernice Johnson
Robin L. Kelly
Bill Foster
Danny K. Davis
André Carson
Suzanne Bonamici
Dina Titus
Lisa Blunt Rochester
Conor Lamb
Daniel W. Lipinski
Jerrold Nadler
Earl Blumenauer
Alcee L. Hastings
Albio Sires
Doris Matsui
Christopher H. Smith
Tom Malinowski
Thomas R. Suozzi
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Zoe Lofgren
Joyce Beatty
Jamie Raskin
Jahana Hayes