

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](mailto: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)

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (Pittsburgh)

Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

Wasatch Front Regional Council (Salt Lake City)

October 14, 2020

Re: Emergency federal funds for state and local highway and public transportation systems

Dear Members of the Congressional Delegation for the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and suburban Maryland:

We write to you on behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, representing 24 local governments in northern Virginia, suburban Maryland and the District of Columbia – home to over 6 million residents and the seat of the federal government, with hundreds of thousands of employees and contractors serving the country.

As the country continues to battle the health and economic impacts of the pandemic, emergency stabilization funding to local governments is essential to sustained operations. We urge you to support targeted federal transportation infrastructure investments at the local level, as the country recovers from the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. As you are aware, the current pandemic has severely impacted the economy at local, regional, and state levels and taken an incredible toll on our local governments, who traditionally spend substantial portions of their budgets on transportation infrastructure and services. Transportation projects and service are critical to promote economic growth, create jobs and help prepare communities for a safer future. Public transportation service, in particular, is a lifeline for essential workers, especially in the National Capital Region, and critical to our economic health and well-being.

We urge you to support the following federal investments to support our region, and the nation's transportation system:

- **\$32 Billion in Emergency Federal Funds for Transit Agencies including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA):** 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. When the CARES Act funding runs out, transit agencies, including WMATA, will be forced to cut transit service and furlough or lay off workers or redistribute capital funds, intended for repairs and expansion, to operating budgets. Both options will seriously harm the viability, safety, and reliability of transit service in the short and long term, but more importantly, it will harm the riders, businesses, and regional economies and workers that depend on transit.
- **\$37 Billion in Emergency Federal Funds for State Departments of Transportation:** additional funding of \$37 billion should be allocated to state departments of transportation to support the maintenance and essential surface transportation projects for roads and highways at the local, state and regional. It is reported that because of impact on state and local revenues, \$8.6 billion in surface transportation projects have been delayed or cancelled, with more on the horizon absent any clear sign of support from the federal government.

The allocation of additional federal funding is essential to avoid any further cutbacks at the local level that would undermine the readiness of the transportation system to support economic recovery. We urge these funds be provided to local areas of all sizes and we that the funds be

provided at 100% federal share to reduce the burden on local areas, given the depletion of local budgets from COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure the availability to utilize these funds during times of critical challenges to local budgets.

Transportation investments are proven to promote economic growth, create jobs, and help prepare communities for a safer future. While the above emergency funding is critical, the passage of a new surface transportation authorization, or long-term continuation of the FAST Act, is vital to ensure financial stability and enable state and local investment in the state of good repair and operations of the region's highway and transit systems. Given the significant disruption in people's travel behavior and commercial activities, efforts need to be made that the funding associated with the new surface transportation authorization are not impacted by this economic disruption and its impacts on highway and public transportation travel.

We look forward to working with you to support transportation investments that create jobs and is essential to facilitate economic recovery. 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 team. If you have any questions, please reach out to COG's Executive Director Chuck Bean at [cbean@mwcog.org](mailto:cbean@mwcog.org) or (202)962-3260.

Sincerely,



Derrick L. Davis  
Chair, COG Board of Directors  
Councilmember, Prince George's County



Kelly Russell  
Chair, Transportation Planning Board  
Alderman, City of Frederick



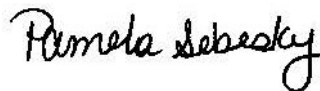
Christian Dorsey  
Vice Chair, COG Board of Directors  
Board Member, Arlington County



Charles Allen  
Vice Chair, Transportation Planning Board  
Councilmember, District of Columbia



Robert C. White, Jr.  
Vice Chair, COG Board of Directors  
Councilmember, District of Columbia



Pam Sebesky  
Vice Chair, Transportation Planning Board  
Vice Mayor, City of Manassas