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PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION
ASSOCIATION**

March 2, 2022

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Mr. Jeffrey D. Zients
White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator and
Counselor to the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Zients:

On behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), which represents an \$80 billion industry that directly employs 450,000 people and supports millions of private-sector jobs, I want to express our deep appreciation for the Administration's leadership and support of public transportation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the nation has made considerable progress in combatting COVID-19. As reflected in the February 25, 2022 release by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of new guidelines permitting Americans to unmask indoors, the nation is beginning the shift to an endemic phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of this transition, and in light of the improving health conditions across the nation, APTA encourages the Administration to reevaluate the current CDC requirement that all passengers wear masks while using public transportation and allow the mandate to lapse after it expires on March 18, 2022.

For the past two years, public transportation agencies have supported and enforced federal policies created to combat COVID-19. We believe these efforts played an important part in our nation's collective fight against COVID-19. However, an extension of the mask mandate beyond March 18 is likely to increase the growing enforcement challenges faced by public transit agencies today.

Public transportation is an estimated 10 times safer than traveling by car and we need to continue to encourage Americans to choose public transportation. At the same time, we recognize that metric-based policies may be imposed if a new variant emerges or if public health conditions warrant.

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We know that the Administration is resolute in its efforts to lead the country back to normality and a path to economic recovery. Ceasing the federal mask mandate will support those efforts and, therefore, we strongly encourage the Administration to end the federal mask mandate on public transportation on March 18, 2022.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Paul P. Skoutelas
President and CEO

cc: Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S.
Department of Health and Human Services

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, U.S. Department of Homeland Security