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Patrick J. Foye
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

March 17, 2020

Senator Charles E. Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Congresswoman Nita Lowey
2365 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Members of the New York State Congressional Delegation:

The nation is in the midst of an extraordinary challenge, facing the consequences of the novel coronavirus pandemic. Public health experts expect the outbreak will continue to worsen, with far reaching impacts to the country's public and economic health.

In the midst of this crisis, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the lifeblood of the New York metropolitan region, is continuing to serve the public. We continue to operate our subways, railroads, buses, and Access-A-Ride services around the clock, helping to get essential employees – medical professionals, childcare workers, first responders, public utility employees, our transportation workers – where they need to be. We've substantially increased the intensity and frequency of cleaning protocols across the system, disinfecting all stations and touchpoints twice a day. Our entire fleet of subways, buses and rail cars is disinfected on a 72-hour cycle – except for Access-A-Ride vehicles serving the disabled, which are sanitized daily. Whatever the cost, the MTA's first priority is protecting the health of our customers as well as the brave MTA employees who continue to show up for work – as they have done after past emergencies like 9/11 and Superstorm Sandy.

But the stark reality is that as more people stay home following the advice of medical experts, the MTA is now facing financial calamity. Based on most recent daily reports, ridership has fallen approximately 60 percent on the subways, 49 percent on buses, 90 percent on Metro-North and 67 percent on Long Island Rail Road. As a result, MTA revenue has plummeted as we provide these essential services. We project the full impact will be over \$4 billion by the end of 2020 – even without accounting for the expected collapse of the more than \$6 billion in state and local taxes dedicated to the MTA.

For these reasons, I am urgently requesting substantial federal aid at the level of MTA revenue losses (\$3.7 billion assuming ridership trends this week continue for six months) and COVID-19 expenses (approximately \$300 million annualized) as we continue to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

The MTA has already committed to finding \$2.8 billion in savings over the next several years. No agency of our size can find additional billions in savings equivalent to the damages we have and will sustain as a result of this pandemic. This is a national disaster that requires a national response.

The agencies of the MTA

MTA New York City Transit
MTA Long Island Rail Road

MTA Metro-North Railroad
MTA Bridges and Tunnels

MTA Construction & Development
MTA Bus Company

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A supplemental formula increase to existing funding sources does not go far enough. And flexing federal funds currently allocated for capital projects cannot be the solution. Not only does this approach unnecessarily pit our operating costs against needed State of Good Repair investments to maintain our system, it has the potential to slow the critical growth of the MTA. Such a huge blow would come at a time when we have achieved tremendous progress: across our system – subways, buses, and commuter railroads alike – on-time performance has achieved sustained improvement and ridership was steadily growing, defying national trends. Our hard-fought, historic capital plan will benefit our customers and the New York economy.

New York produces nearly 10 percent of the entire U.S. GDP, and the nation will need a strong New York to fully rebound from the current crisis. The mass transit system operated by the MTA is essential to that objective, and restoring it is a matter of national interest. But it's also a matter of fairness. As you know, New York is one of the top donor states, sending Washington \$35 billion more every year than it receives in federal assistance. Now that it's desperately needed, we're asking for the federal government to redirect some of this money back to New York.

Time and again, New Yorkers have supported disaster relief for other states and Puerto Rico when they were devastated by natural disasters and other Acts of God. Now we are asking Congress to step up again and deliver for the system that is the lifeblood of New York City and the engine of the region's economic future.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Foye
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

cc:

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand
Congressman Eliot Engel
Congressman Jose E. Serrano
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
Congressman Peter King
Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney
Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez
Congressman Gregory Meeks
Congressman Brian D. Higgins
Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke
Congressman Paul D. Tonko
Congressman Tom Reed
Congressman Hakeem Jeffries

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Congressman Max Rose