Wisconsin Public Transportation Association: Thanks JFC for statewide transit capital assistance program

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Public Transportation Association (WIPTA) thanks the Joint Finance on Committee for its action to create a Statewide Transit Capital Assistance Program. The program, funded with $32 million in Volkswagen settlement dollars, will help offset a significant shortfall in federal transit capital funding.

"Transit systems from across the state have been struggling to do more with less; spending precious dollars to maintain buses that should have been off the road years ago. This program will help address desperate needs in many local transit systems where half our ridership is connecting workers to jobs," said Brian Engelking, WIPTA Executive Committee Chair.

One-third of Wisconsin's transit fleet is past its useful life and many transit systems including Appleton, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Janesville, and Oshkosh in which well over half of their buses are past their useful lives. 86% of these vehicles have NO federal funding secured for their replacement.

"Federal capital dollars have decreased significantly over the last few years. Wisconsin requested $23 million from the Federal Transit Administration last year and was awarded only $24,600," said Jason Wittek, WIPTA Legislative Committee

Chair. "The creation of the Statewide Transit Capital Assistance Program and this funding will help us continue to safely provide vital services to our communities."

"We're very thankful that the Joint Finance Committee recognized this desperate need," concluded Engelking.

WIPTA represents 28 bus systems and 43 shared-ride taxi systems across Wisconsin. WIPTA systems provide 35 million rides to work, 16 million rides to school, and 8 million medical rides each year.