

Reps. Moore, García: Urge support for public transportation agencies and their workforce during coronavirus pandemic

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Milwaukee, WI - Representatives Gwen Moore (WI-04) and Jesús “Chuy” García (IL-04) led 52 Members of Congress in urging Congressional leadership to support public transportation agencies, including their workers, in any future stimulus packages to address the COVID-19 public health emergency.

“Many Americans are staying in their homes to follow guidance by public health officials to keep our communities safe. This is taking a toll on our overall economy, but will particularly impact our public transportation systems, which have lost ridership and farebox revenues” **said Rep. Moore.** “Reliable transportation options are a must for any economy and we need to work to ensure that our public transit systems remain viable. I am so proud to join Rep. Chuy Garcia in calling for critical funding to support our public transit agencies and their workers through these trying times.”

“Many working families in my district and across the country rely on public transit to get where they need to go. But during the COVID-19 health emergency, public transit agencies are feeling the squeeze and struggling to operate with reduced ridership and revenue, ” **said Rep. García.** “Transit agencies like CTA, Pace Bus, and Metra in Chicago still need funds to continue running and to retain personnel. I

am urging House and Senate Leadership to provide robust relief for public transportation agencies in the next stimulus package to protect our communities' access to transit options and to support our transit workers.

The text of the letter is below, and you can find a signed copy of the letter [here](#).

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,