

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2020

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
S-220, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

As you work diligently to craft additional relief packages to respond to the economic impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, we ask that you provide additional relief to public transit agencies and want to express our support for the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) \$3.9 billion request to maintain operations through 2020. The MTA is transporting thousands of nurses, doctors, critical care staff, public utility employees and other essential workers to deal with the nation's largest COVID-19 outbreak. At the same time, the MTA has worked with the public to take aggressive action to limit non-essential travel that has helped to mitigate the spread of this pandemic. These efforts have come at the expense of revenue, tax support, and most importantly the lives of 68 MTA employees. We know the MTA and other transit agencies will carry on in meeting the needs of the public, but we must ensure they receive federal support to continue operations at all of their facilities.

As you know, public transit agencies around the country are facing immediate, enormous funding gaps due to sharp declines in ridership due to mandatory shelter-in-place orders and cautionary social distancing. In some cases, nearly 90% declines in ridership, combined with plummeting sales-tax receipts, have resulted in multi-billion-dollar revenue losses, much of which will simply never be recouped. These fiscal constraints have left public transit agencies without the funding needed to maintain their operating budgets – even as they scale back some service to match the decline in demand.

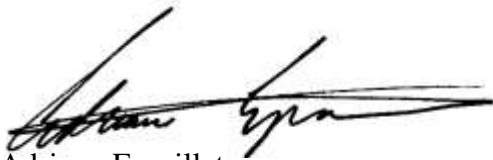
We thank you for heeding the call for help in the *CARES Act* by providing \$25 billion in funding for public transit agencies' operations, including \$4 billion for the MTA. However, as New York and other states and cities continue to implement social distancing policies for at least another month, it is clear more aid will be needed. Furthermore, if a forthcoming stimulus package does not include financial assistance for public transit agencies, they will be forced to cannibalize their capital programs to support their operating budgets. That means that once this crisis is finally over, important infrastructure projects that provide thousands of jobs and promote economic development for dozens

of communities and businesses around the country will feel extended negative impacts, inhibiting the ability of our economy to rebound. We therefore urge you to provide swift assistance to transit agencies and strongly support the MTA's \$3.9 billion request, which in turn will support the thousands of transit workers who are providing critical services even as most Americans stay isolated at home.

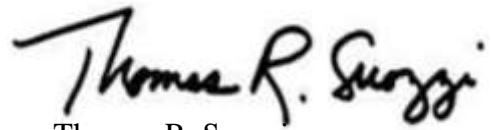
Additionally, as you craft this stimulus package, we urge you to include provisions that hold public transit agencies harmless when it comes to traditional federal formula funding. Most formula funding provided by the Federal Transit Administration is allocated based on annual ridership statistics. So it will come as no surprise that the jurisdictions most severely affected by COVID-19 will suffer long-term losses if their significantly-reduced 2020 ridership statistics are used to calculate future funding. In most cases, these formulas are set forth in law and therefore can only be resolved through changes in statute. We therefore hope you will include language that protects public transit agencies from suffering a secondary crisis as our economy finally recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. While immediate resources are needed across the board, we must keep in mind the need to ensure our economy can bounce back as quickly as possible.

We know you are working around the clock and in a bipartisan fashion to respond to this crisis, and we appreciate your attention to this issue at this critical time.

Sincerely,



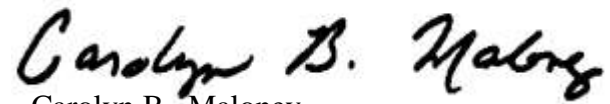
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



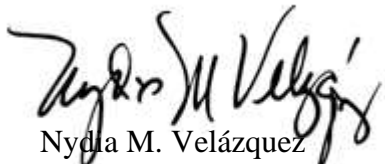
Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



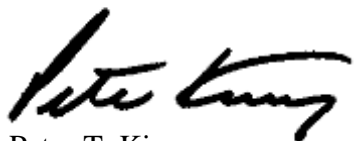
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Max Rose
Member of Congress



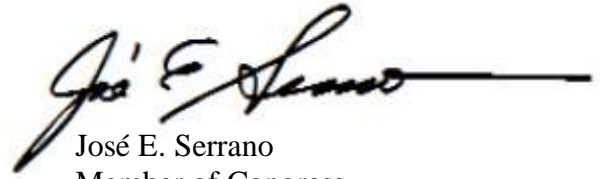
Peter T. King
Member of Congress



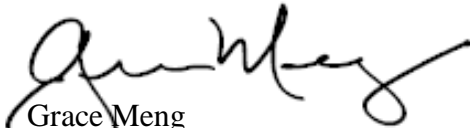
Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress



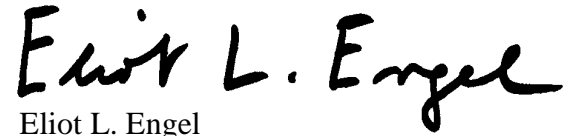
Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



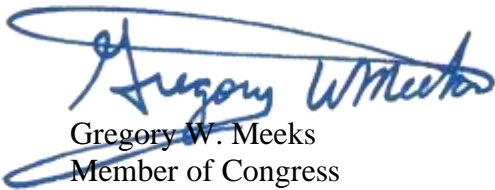
Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress



Hakeem S. Jeffries
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Cc: Rep. Nita M. Lowey, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations
Sen. Richard Shelby, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations