



March 19, 2009

Dear Legislator:

We represent the citizens of New York who depend upon a safe, clean and reliable public transportation system. We represent the working class New Yorkers – many of whom do not own automobiles – who depend upon an affordable public transportation system to get to their jobs, to their schools and to their health care providers. We represent the employers of the region that recognize that a well functioning subway, bus and commuter rail network is the prerequisite for continued economic growth and is what sets New York apart from the rest of the country. We represent the hard-working building trades and construction workers responsible for New York's skyline that are dependent upon public sector projects to put food on the table during these hard times. And we represent those that care about reducing the asthma rates of children in disproportionately impacted communities throughout the city and about making this city a whole lot greener, more equitable and a little bit more livable.

We represent your constituents, and we are calling on you to act and adopt a comprehensive, long term funding plan for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. It must be a plan that provides for affordable fares, expanded service and long term capital investment. And it must be adopted now – before the Authority is forced to raise fares and tolls by as much as 30 percent, while at the same time drastically reducing service across the system.

The New York Legislature has had long enough to act. This issue is no surprise to those that have been paying attention. Almost a year ago, Governor Paterson called on Richard Ravitch to head a Commission to review options for comprehensively addressing the MTA's operating and capital funding needs. This Commission represented business, labor, environmental advocates and everyday straphangers. And the proposal that the Commission put forward has the broad-based support of all of these constituencies – *your* constituencies. It is a proposal that is fair, balanced and comprehensive. It relies on transit riders, motorists and the employers that benefit from the system to all participate in the solution for saving the system.

Once again, we are calling for bipartisan action to respond to the needs of New Yorkers and prevent a backsliding into the kind of neglect and disinvestment in our transportation system that marked earlier decades and nearly crippled New York. With funding for the MTA in place, we can move on to confront the other innumerable challenges that our state faces in this time.

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We stand united in our commitment to working with you and your colleagues towards a solution to this crisis. We respectfully request a meeting with you in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Denis Hughes
President
New York State AFL-CIO

Gene Russianoff
Senior Attorney
Straphangers Campaign

Gary LaBarbera
President
Building & Construction Trades Council

Kevin Corbett
Co-Chair
Empire State Transportation Alliance

Mike Fishman
President
32BJ, Service Employees International Union

Kate Slevin
Executive Director
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Randi Weingarten
President
United Federation of Teachers

David Jones
President & CEO
Community Service Society of New York

Edward F. Ott
Executive Director
NYC Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Carol Kellermann
President
Citizens Budget Commission

Kathryn Wylde
President & CEO
Partnership for New York City

Bob Yaro
President
Regional Plan Association

Richard T. Anderson
President
New York Building Congress

**Pratt Center for Community
Development**

Fifth Avenue Committee

William C. Rudin
Chairman
Association for a Better New York

The POINT CDC

Erasmus Neighborhood Federation

Dick Dadey
Executive Director
Citizens Union

**Morningside Heights/West Harlem
Sanitation Coalition**

Nancy Ploeger
President
Manhattan Chamber of Commerce