

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

As Congress considers additional federal assistance measures to help communities recover from this extraordinary public health crisis, we respectfully urge you to provide emergency supplemental funding for the nation's public transportation systems. The effects of the COVID-19 outbreak are widespread and having an unprecedented impact on every facet of American life, including essential services like public transportation. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is requesting \$16 billion in direct financial assistance to help the nation's public transportation agencies offset additional costs and lost revenue and ensure the continuation of safe and reliable service. Funding shortfalls of this magnitude jeopardize public transportation service in every corner of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania's public transportation agencies provide critical mobility and are an economic engine for the entire Commonwealth. Amid the COVID-19 crisis, transit agencies in Pennsylvania have taken on added importance, providing vital transportation for transit dependent residents and essential service providers, including medical professionals, employees of essential commerce, public safety and emergency services personnel, and utility workers. Public transportation providers continue to deliver service throughout the region during this challenging time, providing much-needed mobility and stability for Pennsylvania residents.

Financial impacts on a massive scale are being felt by transit providers in all of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Much of the operating assistance provided by the state to Pennsylvania transit agencies is derived from state sales taxes and other funding mechanisms. Those sources will be significantly compromised by the broad economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, creating extensive financial burdens.

In southeastern Pennsylvania, several members of our delegation have been in direct and frequent contact with leadership of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), which serves the Philadelphia metropolitan region. The financial impact of the outbreak on SEPTA's operations will be devastating. In the current fiscal year, SEPTA has budgeted anticipated fare revenue of \$165 million between March 1 and the end of its fiscal year on June 30. Based on ridership projections, informed by significant declines since the beginning

of the month, SEPTA anticipates a net operating loss of \$150 million through the end of the fiscal year.

Based on updated passenger counts, SEPTA transit ridership is down 60 percent from baseline levels and Regional Rail has fallen by 86 percent. Governor Wolf’s order to close all non-life-sustaining businesses guarantees heightened and sustained ridership and revenue losses that are not just an immediate threat, but if not addressed now will impact SEPTA’s ability to provide critical mobility once recovery and safe and reliable public transportation will be needed most. SEPTA’s operating funding shortfall is not of SEPTA’s making. SEPTA is consistently a national model for fiscal management and taxpayer stewardship. With a surplus through February, prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, SEPTA was on pace to complete its 21st consecutive year with a balanced budget.

Transit agencies in southwestern Pennsylvania, including the Port Authority of Allegheny County (PAT) and Beaver County Transit Authority (BCTA) also face significant financial harm as a result of decreased ridership stemming from COVID-19. PAT leadership is compiling full loss information and intends to provide regular updates to elected representatives. Specifically, they already face increased costs related to the purchase of personal protective equipment (gloves, sanitizer, disinfecting wipes), other key supplies (disinfectant cleaner, bleach), and added labor costs to ensure vehicles are cleaned daily and safe for passengers. In addition to decreased ridership, PAT is also facing cancellation by clients who advertise on its system. Yet, despite these challenges, transit agencies in southwestern Pennsylvania like PAT must be able to retain some level of service. Many southwestern Pennsylvanians continue to rely on public transit as their only transportation option—especially our seniors who need to be able to get to doctors, grocery stores, or their families.

Pennsylvania and the nation need strong and reliable transit systems, especially when this crisis ends and people will be returning to work, school and normalcy. We look forward, then, to working with you to secure emergency supplemental funding to ensure transit agencies have the financial resources necessary to serve their communities today and into the future.

Thank you in advance for your support of this important effort.

Sincerely,



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senate



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Conor Lamb
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress