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Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Representative Yvette Clark
Representative Antonio Delgado
Representative Eliot Engel
Representative Adriano Espaillat
Representative Hakeem Jeffries
Representative Peter King
Representative Nita Lowey
Representative Carolyn Maloney
Representative Sean Maloney

Representative Gregory Meeks
Representative Grace Meng
Representative Jerry Nadler
Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Representative Kathleen Rice
Representative Max Rose
Representative José Serrano
Representative Thomas Suozzi
Representative Nydia Velázquez
Representative Lee Zeldin

March 19, 2020

Re: \$4B in Federal Rescue Funds Must be Directed to The MTA to Respond to Financial Losses from COVID-19

Dear Members of the New York Congressional Delegation,

We, the undersigned, strongly urge that you grant the MTA's request for a full federal aid package of at least \$4B in emergency operating support response to the COVID-19 crisis. The COVID-19 emergency is unprecedented. We agree with Governor Cuomo when he says New York government alone cannot meet this crisis without the capacity for the federal government.

Over 8.5 million riders rely on the MTA regularly. A financial setback of this scale will have an insurmountable impact on New York if the MTA is not supported immediately. We need to ensure that healthcare workers, essential government personnel and other working New Yorkers who all rely on public transportation can get to work as we come together to fight this virus. And even after this crisis passes, we need to ensure that the MTA is able to continue serving its essential role in our region's economy. A well-working transit system is necessary for lifting up the most vulnerable New Yorkers who use it to access jobs, education and other opportunities and services.

The MTA is also planning long-overdue accessibility improvements to a subway system that is all but inaccessible to New Yorkers with disabilities, and has begun to take steps to reform a long-dysfunctional paratransit system. We are concerned that such a blow to the MTA's budget will delay a transition given that public transit agencies are a crucial part of disability justice.

We are also concerned about the 65,000 workers who depend on the MTA for their livelihoods. Just as other industries are requesting bailouts from the federal government to ensure their workforce is not devastated, workers in public transit are also vulnerable. If the MTA is forced to cut service, layoffs could be significant.

Unfortunately, New York City and State are unlikely to be able to fully support the MTA, as they will face significant funding shortages themselves as a result of this crisis. The federal government is therefore needed to step in and ensure that the MTA will survive.

Strong public transit in individual cities and states is essential to addressing national economic and environmental goals. This decline will negatively impact mass transit ridership, which in turn will have sharp impacts on the economy and environment. In this light, we urge you to protect the nation's largest public transit system and address the MTA's current crisis with utmost urgency, so an equitable economy is not relegated to a pipe dream.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership during this crisis.

Sincerely,

Miranda Nelson
NY/NJ Director
Jobs to Move America

Del Vitale
Director, District 4
United Steelworkers

Dennis Trainor
Vice President
CWA District One

Nick Sifuentes
Executive Director
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Peter Iwanowicz
Executive Director
Environmental Advocates of New York

McGregor Smith
Executive Director
New York Lawyers for Public Interest

Renae Reynolds
Transportation Planner
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA)

George McAnanama
Member Representative
First Unitarian Society of Westchester