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**Distribution of American Rescue Plan Funding in New Jersey**

Tri-State Transportation Campaign appreciates the administration's effort to conduct outreach and receive public input on the state’s use of the American Rescue Plan funding. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments.

*Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a 501(c)(3) non-profit policy advocacy organization dedicated to mobility, accessibility and livability in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut.*

First and foremost, we urge a swift resolution regarding the federal American Rescue Plan funding dispute between New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut that is currently holding up the disbursement of funds. These funds must be disbursed as intended and in accordance with the funding formula agreed upon and utilized by the other 49 states. NY remains an unreasonable outlier in this respect. This dispute has made it impossible for NJTransit to approve it’s FY22 operating budget and puts into question the availability of vital funding for an agency already running on a shoestring budget.

We understand and appreciate how critical the emergency federal funding is for all states as no one was spared the impacts of COVID-19. Our federal delegation has fought hard for the proper funding to bring back to our state. NJTransit’s riders, especially those who are transit dependent, remain vulnerable to service cuts or fare increases as this dispute lingers. This past year has changed the way we live, work and travel: while some have been able to adopt a remote work model, essential workers and transit dependent residents continued to lean on NJTransit to get to their jobs, stores, and essential health services. We must prioritize our residents who rely on public transportation, especially intra-city bus riders to ensure that their way of getting places is dependable and respectable.

Additionally, receiving this federal funding doesn’t absolve the state from funding transit--NJTransit needs **stable and dedicated revenue for operating so that it can meet its capital needs, especially those projects identified in the agency's 5 year capital program.** The influx of emergency federal funding solves our immediate challenges but does not address the overall funding issues that have plagued the agency for decades. The most debilitating funding practice, the capital to operating transfers, must be ended.
Thank you for your time and consideration. I’m looking forward to working with NJ riders, NJTransit and the Administration to make our public transit system, equitable, reliable, affordable, and resilient.