

Empire State Transportation Alliance

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Contact

Nadine Lemmon, Tri-State Transportation Campaign (917) 767-7698

Ricardo Gotla, Regional Plan Association (646) 546-4323

Legislative Leaders, Labor, Businesses, Advocates: Governor Cuomo Must Help Reach Consensus to Fund Statewide Transit Capital Plan

Albany, New York – Today, a diverse group of state legislators, businesses, labor unions, environmentalists, and transportation advocates are calling on Governor Cuomo to lead the way and build consensus on new revenue sources to fund New York's statewide transit capital needs. Budget season is over in New York State, but the MTA still has a \$14 billion shortfall in its proposed \$32 billion 2015-2019 capital plan, and suburban and upstate transit systems still have a \$500+ million gap in their proposed five-year capital plan. Viable funding options exist—user fees, toll reform, sales and income taxes, increased state and local support—but the state needs to act now in order to avoid returning to the dilapidated transit systems we experienced in the 1970s and '80s.

The list of those calling on the Governor is growing, and it includes Assembly and Senate members from both sides of the aisle, AECOM, AFL-CIO, Amalgamated Transit Union Statewide Conference, American Council of Engineering Companies of New York, Associated General Contractors Association, Broadway Association, Construction Industry Council of Westchester and Hudson Valley, General Contractors Association, Move NY, Municipal Arts Society, NYS Laborers, New York League of Conservation Voters, NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign, Regional Plan Association, the Riders Alliance, TWU Local 100 and Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

If new sources of funding are not identified soon, agencies will be forced to raise fares and tolls or reduce service to pay for much-needed infrastructure, taking more money

from the pockets of millions of daily riders, many of whom have no other transportation options. The capital program provides funds for thousands of new buses, subway and commuter rail cars, modern signal upgrades, track replacement and scores of station renovations.

A fully-funded, five-year statewide capital plan will have far reaching benefits for the entire state of New York, regardless of which borough or county one calls home. New York has the largest transit manufacturing cluster in the nation, if not the world. That means when dollars are invested in our transit capital needs these are dollars that go to solid New York manufacturing jobs across the state. From Bombardier in the Adirondacks to Kawasaki in Westchester, a fully-funded statewide capital plan is a vital source and essential use of our economic development dollars.

Jay Simson, President, American Council of Engineering Companies of New York: "The American Council of Engineering Companies of New York strongly supports a fully-funded statewide transit capital program. Funding statewide transit needs is essential to support growth, maintain the state's economic competitiveness and improve the quality of life for all residents of New York State. With current funding levels proving inadequate, alternative revenue sources must be considered to ensure a safe and reliable system."

Mike Elmendorf, President & CEO, Associated General Contractors of New York State: "It is abundantly clear to anyone that travels throughout New York State that increased investment in our state's infrastructure is necessary to maintain global competitiveness. From roads and bridges upstate, to the MTA and mass transit system downstate, New York must continue to fully fund capital programs that move our state forward. While the Governor and State Legislature made a significant down payment towards the needs in the 2015-2016 budget, more work remains. I look forward to collaborating with my partners in government to ensure that our long-term infrastructure needs are met."

Bob Yaro, President Emeritus, Regional Plan Association: "Time is running out to fully fund the MTA's 2015-19 Capital Program and to close the \$14 billion funding gap in the program. Already, service is deteriorating and delays are mounting on New York's subways, buses and commuter trains. Failing to fully fund the program will put a big dent in the economy and livability of New York City and its suburbs. We call on Governor Cuomo and the Legislature to act on this urgent issue before this legislative session ends next month."

Marcia Bystryn, President, New York League of Conservation Voters: "New Yorkers have among the lowest carbon footprints in the country because of our transit system, but record ridership has left the MTA at a crossroads. The long-term sustainability of our buses, subways and commuter rails depend on a fully-funded MTA Capital Plan that provides for a state of good repair and increased service. We look forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature to find creative ways to fund our invaluable public transit network."

Ross Pepe, President, Construction Industry Council of Westchester and Hudson Valley: “MTA and its subsidiary Metro North are vital links to the economic success of the metropolitan region. New York State and City governments must close the funding gap and assure that needed improvements for safety and capacity are part of a 5-Year Capital Plan to modernize the system and deliver on-time performance.”

James T. B. Tripp, Senior Council, Environmental Defense Fund: “The MTA system is a critical environmental asset for the downstate region as well. Proper funding of the MTA capital program has to be an integral component of any meaningful climate action plan for the State. This incredible, energy-efficient, low-carbon-per-capita transportation asset is the envy of the rest of the country and also supports urban revitalization, not just in NYC but other urban centers in its service region.”

Denise Richardson, Executive Director, General Contractors Association of New York: “When it comes to helping find a solution to the MTA’s Capital needs, Albany treats the system like the caboose rather than the engine powering the region’s economy. They need to get a multi-year Capital Program back on track fast in order to keep a system that carries over 8.5 million people a day safer and more reliable. That starts with adopting the full five year, \$32 billion Plan.”

Joshua Knoller, Spokesman, Broadway Association: “The Broadway Association was formed over 100 years ago when subway construction in the Times Square community proved to be disruptive to local businesses and hazardous to pedestrians. Now those businesses, which comprise our membership, stand together in solidarity with the MTA and the demands a booming tourism industry have placed on our subways with record ridership. To keep our subways running in a safe, efficient and reliable manner, we must find the funding stream necessary to preserve the MTA’s \$32 billion, five-year Capital Program.”

Veronica Vanterpool, Executive Director, Tri-State Transportation Campaign: “New York’s transit systems support the state’s economy and improve the quality of life in our communities by providing safe and reliable mobility. Transit systems connect businesses, help expand the labor pool and support economic development across the state. Additionally, New York has a premier cluster of transit manufacturing businesses that would benefit significantly from a fully-funded statewide capital plan. Put simply, funding transit is good business.”

John Raskin, Executive Director, Riders Alliance: "There is no more important issue on the table for transit riders today than capital funding for public transportation. Ridership continues to grow and grow but public investment hasn't kept pace. That's why subway, bus and commuter rail riders are starting to see more delays, more equipment failures and more breakdowns. If Governor Cuomo and state lawmakers don't step up to fund public transportation, riders will pay dearly in the form of fare hikes, service reductions and years of deteriorating service. Almost nine million daily transit riders are looking to our elected officials for solutions."

Margaret Newman, Executive Director, Municipal Art Society of New York: “New York is facing an infrastructure emergency with our transportation system at the center of it. We know that a functioning, modern public transit system is the engine behind a city whose economy is larger than all but 12 nations in the world. Governor Cuomo must seize this opportunity to divert a disaster on our rails and roads—the livelihoods of millions of people and hundreds of thousands of businesses hang in the balance.”

Alex Matthiessen, Director, Move NY Campaign: “New York can’t afford to wait to invest in its transit infrastructure, which is vital to the state’s economy and future prosperity. The feds have made it clear that we’re largely on our own but we have to act now before the system further deteriorates and costs New Yorkers even more than they already pay in taxes, tolls and fares. Luckily, we have solutions on the table that spread the cost and benefits of investing in the system fairly across user groups and the region. Now we just need our leaders to sit down and get to work.”

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