

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**  
February 23, 2009

Representative John W. Olver, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
2358A Rayburn HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Olver:

We are writing to urge you to include language in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Transportation Appropriations Bill that would simply allow public transportation systems to use their federal transit funds for operating assistance on a temporary basis.

All across the U.S., public transportation systems are facing a crisis situation like never before. Transit ridership remains high as a result of the recent record high gas prices. Yet, ironically, at a time when Americans are leaving their cars at home like never before, public transportation systems are being forced to implement painful service cuts, fare increases and layoffs because of shortages in state and local revenues.

In St. Louis, Metro will be eliminating most bus service - including express routes - outside the Interstate 270 loop in Missouri. MetroLink trains will run less frequently on both sides of the Mississippi River, and more than 500 employees will be laid off. California passed a budget this week which eliminates transit operating funding, likely resulting in massive service cuts and layoffs throughout the state. Officials with the Chicago Transit Authority say that their current \$213 million budget shortfall threatens to shut down their entire system. And here in the D.C. area, Washington Metro is considering widening the gaps between train and bus arrivals, closing some station mezzanines on weekends or week nights, eliminating many bus routes that people rely upon to get to work, and cutting jobs.

While the recently passed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included funding for transit capital projects, transit operating assistance was stripped from the bill. Unfortunately, even if the stimulus bill had provided transit systems with enough money to double the size of their existing fleets, they would probably have to keep a good portion of those buses in the garage. The majority of systems simply do not have the operating money to run their existing fleets. The stimulus bill was intended to not only put Americans back to work, but also help them keep the jobs they have to survive.

The FY 2009 Transportation Appropriations measure offers an opportunity to save hundreds of good paying transit jobs as well as the jobs of transit riders who rely on public transportation to get to work. **We can do this without adding any funding to the bill.** We simply urge you to include language in the bill that would allow public transportation systems to use their federal transit funds for operating assistance during this crisis period.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



Jay McKing

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Bob Filner

Ellen Stauscher

David Liginich

Pin Van Hollen

Grace F. Napolitano

Jan Schakowsky