

May 12, 2020

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,
Honorable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities,
Honorable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport,
Honorable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance,

Re: Groups from Sectors Across Canada Come Together to Ask for Emergency and Permanent Transit Operating Funding

Prime Minister Trudeau,
Minister McKenna,
Minister Garneau,
Minister Morneau,

Public transit remains a lifeline for many Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic and will be essential to the country's economic recovery. Essential service workers continue to rely on public transit to get to work, while others depend on transit to access basic needs such as medical care and food. Nevertheless, as the majority of Canadians are confined at home and ridership has declined by up to 90% for some, transit agencies can no longer rely on fare revenues to maintain operations and cover expenses. If we continue down this road, public transit agencies will be in dire straits and incapable of maintaining adequate levels of service to provide the basic right to move.

The Federal Government: A Critical Actor in Public Transit Recovery

This uncertain period requires innovative solutions. This is why we, the signatories below, have come together to demand that the federal government review its role in funding and maintaining the operational costs of public transit systems across Canada.

Two essential actions are needed for public transit to survive past this crisis:

- 1) We join our voices with many groups such as the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Amalgamated Transit Union Canada (ATU) in calling for emergency funding to keep Canadian transit systems running during the pandemic, along with bridge funding.
- 2) We urge the government to continue funding public transit beyond the pandemic. In reference to Minister McKenna's mandate letter, the federal government must act on their promise of funding public transit permanently. This must be implemented as soon as possible because capital funding alone cannot keep transit affordable or functioning in the long term. Stable federal operating funding is needed for local transit agencies to improve service and cap fares to boost ridership after the pandemic.

Public Transit: Crucial for Our Communities Across Canada

Maintaining transit service has never been more important. Emergency federal funding is needed to ensure that transit agencies can maintain an adequate level of service during the pandemic for transit workers and riders to practice physical distancing.

Transit agencies need financial assistance with their operating costs in order to respect provincial public health guidelines. As such, they need to be supported in the purchase of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies, in providing paid sick days for employees, and halting fare collection as long as necessary.

We must re-evaluate how we see public transit and remember the vital role it plays in keeping essential services afloat. Transit is an essential component of a green economic recovery. We must equip ourselves with the necessary tools to face the climate crisis that is still ahead of us.

Thank you,

Signatories

National

ATU Canada

ACORN Canada

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment

SEIU Local 2

Transport Action Canada

The Leap

David Suzuki Foundation

Canadian Federation of Students - Fédération canadienne des étudiantes et étudiants

The Council of Canadians

Green Communities Canada

Québec

Trajectoire Québec

Équiterre

Alliance Transit

Ontario

ATU Local 107 (Hamilton ON)

ATU Local 113 (Toronto ON)

ATU Local 1189 (Guelph ON)

ATU Local 279 (Ottawa ON)

Citizens United for a Sustainable Planet (CUSP) - Thunder Bay

CUPE Local 2

CUPE Local 5500 (Ottawa ON)

CUPE Ontario

CodeRedTO

Disability Justice Network of Ontario

Doctors for Safe Cycling

Ecology Ottawa

Environment Hamilton

Fight Gridlock (Brampton)

Free Transit Toronto

Free Transit Ottawa

Hamilton Transit Riders' Union

Hamilton and District Labour Council

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

MPP Jessica Bell, MPP for University Rosedale

London Cycle Link

London Transit Riders Alliance

London Environmental Network

Ottawa Transit Riders
Scarborough Transit Action
Social Planning Toronto
TAAG - Transit Action Alliance of Guelph
Toronto Environmental Alliance
Transport Action Ontario
Tri-Cities Transport Action Group (Region of Waterloo)
TTCriders

Manitoba

Manitoba Federation of Labour
CUPE Local 204
Functional Transit Winnipeg
ATU Local 1505 (Winnipeg MB)
Green Action Centre
Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

Saskatchewan

Bus Riders of Saskatoon

Alberta

Free Transit Edmonton

British-Columbia

Abundant Transit BC
Better Transit Alliance of Greater Victoria
Wilderness Committee
Happy City
ATU Local 1724 (Vancouver BC)
HandyDART Riders' Alliance
Vancouver and District Labour Council

Atlantic provinces

Transport Action Atlantic
It's More Than Buses (Halifax)

CC: Premier Doug Ford, Premier François Legault, Premier John Horgan, Premier Jason Kenney, Premier Scott Moe, Premier Brian Pallister, Premier Blaine Higgs, Premier Stephen McNeil, Premier Dennis King, Premier Dwight Ball, Premier Caroline Cochrane, Premier Sandy Silver and Premier Joe Savikataaq.