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PRESS RELEASE

**TRANSIT UNION CALLS HIGGS GOVERNMENT “SHORT-SIGHTED”
FOR REFUSING TO ACCEPT FEDERAL FUNDING RELIEF
FOR NEW BRUNSWICK TRANSIT OPERATIONS**

TORONTO July 29, 2020—Amalgamated Transit Union Canada, President, John Di Nino is calling out New Brunswick Premier, Blaine Higgs and Minister of Transportation, Bill Oliver for refusing to accept and match federal funding to help struggling transit agencies recover from the financial impact of COVID-19.

“I am extremely disappointed with the Higgs Government for denying the people of New Brunswick the transportation service they expect and deserve,” said Di Nino. “Cities have faced extensive service reductions, layoffs, and devastating farebox revenue losses during the pandemic. As these cities continue to reopen and more people return to work, we need to restore service levels, or thousands of tax paying citizens will be left at the curb waiting for a bus and unable to get to work.”

Since the start of the pandemic, the Union has been lobbying the Federal Government for emergency funding to help transit agencies recover from financial chaos and allow them to restore pre-pandemic service levels. The Federal Government came through with a \$19 billion funding announcement to help municipalities across the country. \$1.8 billion of those funds are specifically dedicated to helping transit operations – on the condition that the provinces equally match the federal transit funding they receive – but Higgs refused to accept and match the federal funds.

“New Brunswickers have a right to know that their government has made a short-sighted decision to let public transit fail by not investing in it. This short-sightedness from the Premier will have long-term consequences – and clearly, this government has not considered what voters and tax-paying citizens expect from their elected governments,” says Di Nino.

“Our poll conducted by Probe Research showed that 91% of Canadians believe it is the government’s responsibility to provide safe, reliable and affordable transit. This is a historic opportunity for the Province of New Brunswick to utilize federal funds so that cities can address the non-recoverable losses suffered under the pandemic without cutting the services that New Brunswickers rely on.” continued Di Nino.

“We urge the Government of New Brunswick to reconsider its decision because public transit is a social good and every \$1 invested in transit delivers \$4 in economic growth. It is critical to New Brunswick’s economic recovery,” concluded Di Nino.



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The Amalgamated Transit Union is made up of 34,000 transit professionals in nine Canadian provinces. They represent vehicle operators, maintenance staff, paratransit operations, clerical staff, dispatchers, administrative professionals and workers in the over-the-road motor coach industry. The union was founded in 1892 and represents workers in Canada's urban, suburban and rural communities.

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