

1000 Friends of Connecticut
American Public Health Association
Business Council of Fairfield County
Connecticut Association of Community Transportation
Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby
Connecticut Fund for the Environment
Connecticut Livable Streets Campaign
Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority
League of Women Voters of CT
Partnership for Strong Communities
People to Jobs Regional Transportation Task Force
Regional Plan Association
Transit for Connecticut
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

April 29, 2009

Senator Christopher Dodd
30 Lewis St, Suite 101
Hartford, CT 06103

Re: Federal support for transit operations

Dear Senator Dodd:

Thank you for your recent support of public transportation. Your leadership is necessary to make Connecticut more transit-friendly, and in turn, more attractive for businesses and more livable for residents.

As civic, advocacy, business, housing, and environmental groups that represent the riders of Connecticut's public transportation system, we urge you to take your support a step further, and work for **federal support of mass transit operations**.

Adequate funding for mass transit operations, in addition to support for capital projects, is essential for a well functioning system and will ensure that the state is able to meet increasing demand for transit service. Right now, transit ridership in Connecticut is reaching record highs. In 2008, despite the economic downturn, CT Transit ridership was up 5.5% over 2007 levels.

But as ridership soars, local transit agencies are struggling to pay for operations, and are forced to raise fares and cut service. In Bridgeport, one of the state's poorest cities, fare increases last October raised the cost of a bus trip to \$1.75, fifty cents more than on any

other bus system in the state. Last fall, \$5 million to expand bus service throughout the state was cut from the state budget. New Haven Line rail riders face draconian MTA service cuts and fare increases that are set to take place on May 31. As states go broke, similar situations reverberate in communities across the nation, as transit riders everywhere struggle to get to work, school, hospitals, and to see family.

It's time to take the steps necessary to ensure that our state becomes a greener, equitable, and more business friendly place. With new transit projects on deck, along with housing and commercial development near stations, Connecticut is poised to reshape its economy and development patterns, making us more economically competitive and kinder to the environment. But to really reach this vision, riders need to be able to afford a ticket. This is why we urge you to heed our call and work for a reinstatement of federal support for mass transit operations.

Thank you for your leadership and support of public transportation. We look forward to hearing from you and how we may work together to provide Connecticut with a 21st century transit system.

Sincerely,

Mark Abraham, Coordinator
Connecticut Livable Streets Campaign

Karen Burnaska, Coordinator
Transit for Connecticut

Jara Burnett, Co-President
CT League of Women Voters

Linda Degutis, Immediate Past-President
American Public Health Association

Heidi Green, President
1000 Friends of Connecticut

Curt Johnson, Program Director
Connecticut Fund for the Environment

Jill Kelly, Carol Leighton, Co-Chairs
Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby

Ron Kilcoyne, General Manager/CEO
Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority

David Kooris, Connecticut Director
Regional Plan Association

Joe McGee, Vice President, Public Policy
& Programs
Business Council of Fairfield County

Gloria Mills, Executive Director,
**Connecticut Association for Community
Transportation**

Diane Randall, Director
Partnership for Strong Communities

Kate Slevin, Executive Director
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Debbie Venditti, Program Manager
**People to Jobs (PTJ) Regional
Transportation Task Force, a
project of The Workplace, Inc.**