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Public Transportation Would Aid New York State's Tappan Zee Loan Application

Statement of Kate Slevin, Executive Director, Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Today, New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Joan McDonald said that the state had applied for a \$3 billion federal loan through the US Department of Transportation's TIFIA program. USDOT uses a range of criteria to evaluate applications for this program, including environmental impact and sustainability. Projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage the use of alternative transportation, reduce reliance on foreign oil, and promote livability are more likely to receive federal loans. Right now, the state's plan does not advance these goals.

If the Tappan Zee Bridge project were to include public transportation, the state would have a stronger application. Presently, the project does not include any plans for public transit, despite strong support for a bus rapid transit system across the I-287 corridor. TSTC's review of the project's draft environmental impact statement has also raised questions about whether or not the bridge's design will fully accommodate future transit options.

The TIFIA program covers 1/3 of a project's cost. Based on the \$3 billion loan application figure, this would put the cost of the Tappan Zee Bridge at \$9 billion. In the past, the state has said that the bridge replacement would cost \$5.2 billion. The state should invest the extra money in public transportation and build a bridge that meets the needs of the 21st century.

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit advocacy and policy organization working for a more sustainable transportation network in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Visit www.tstc.org.