



**Testimony of Steven Higashide, Tri-State Transportation Campaign
NYC Council – Committee on Transportation Hearing
New York City Council
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Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Steven Higashide and I am the federal advocate for Tri-State Transportation Campaign. We are a regional watchdog group that works towards a balanced and environmentally sustainable transportation network. And we are extremely concerned about the proposed House transportation bill, HR7.

HR7 contains many provisions that could impact New York City. It eliminates the small federal programs that help fund pedestrian and bike safety projects. It erodes local control, and offloads responsibility for many federal-aid bridges onto local governments. But I'm here today to talk about public transportation – and the House bill would devastate it.

The House bill would undo a precedent set 30 years ago under President Reagan and eliminate dedicated federal funding for public transportation. Instead of the secure lockbox that exists today, transit funds would be subject to Congress's political whims and at risk of budget cuts every year. The MTA has said HR7 would put at risk \$1 billion a year, funding that helps bring the system closer to a state of good repair. Transit agencies across the country have said that if this provision becomes law, they will see immediate downgrades in their bond ratings.

It's ironic that HR7 is known as the "American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act," because it would make it much harder for people to get to work. I think New Yorkers understand this intuitively, but here are the numbers: More than 56% of workers in New York City get to work on public transportation. More than 5 million people ride city subways daily. Two-and-a-half million ride city buses. Another half-million ride the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North.

It's that simple. Public transportation supports the city, supports the region, is vital to the state's economy, and vital to cities across the country. It will remain vital, particularly with many analysts predicting record gas prices this year. That's why, in this region, we've seen members of Congress from both sides of the aisle throw their support behind Congressman Nadler's amendment. We thank the Congressman for his leadership, and urge the City Council to support this amendment by passing this resolution. Thank you.