

**New York League of Conservation Voters
NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign
Reinvent Albany
Riders Alliance
Tri-State Transportation Campaign**

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Transit Riders, Advocates Hail Senate and Assembly for Standing Up for Transit Funds

Consensus in Albany: Both Houses Reject Governor Cuomo's Proposed \$40 Million Raid from Transit in State Budget

Money Could Be Used to Restore Service, Protect Riders From Excessive Fare Increases

NEW YORK, NY—Transit riders and advocates praised the Senate and Assembly today for standing up for subway, bus and commuter rail riders in the state budget, after both houses of the legislature rejected Governor Cuomo's proposed \$40 million raid on transit funds in their respective one-house budget resolutions.

The consensus among the Senate and Assembly builds strong momentum for the push to reject the raid on the funds when the final state budget is negotiated.

John Raskin, Executive Director of the Riders Alliance, said, "The Senate and Assembly have transit riders' backs. Our representatives are standing up for everyone who rides a bus, subway or commuter train in New York. Now we need Senators and Assembly Members to carry this fight through to the end and make sure that transit funding is protected in the final state budget."

Gene Russianoff, staff attorney for the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign, said, "Hooray! The Assembly and Senate are standing up for millions of subway, bus and suburban riders. What we need is for the Governor to get on board with the riding public."

Veronica Vanterpool, Executive Director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, said, "Transit users, operators, and manufacturers are relying on our state legislators to protect dedicated transit funds, and we are glad they did. By rejecting this \$40M diversion

in both the Senate and Assembly budget proposals, our elected officials are listening to those who depend on a strong transit system. It's now time for Governor Cuomo to listen and drop this proposal for good."

Marcia Bystryn, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters, said, "We applaud state legislative leaders Skelos, Klein and Silver for saying no to Governor Cuomo's proposed \$40M sweep of dedicated transit funds. Transit riders are counting on these leaders to stand firm in their negotiations with Governor Cuomo and to send a clear message that the MTA should not be used as an ATM to fill budgetary gaps."

William Henderson, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, said, "We thank the Assembly and Senate for their clear statement that dedicated transit funds should be used for their intended purpose and not to fill holes in the State's general fund. Rejecting these proposed diversions is an important step in stabilizing transit funding and protecting bus, subway, and commuter rail riders. We urge our legislative leaders to keep fighting for riders as a final spending plan is negotiated."

John Lyons, State Chair of the Amalgamated Transit Union, said, "I'm grateful that the Senate and Assembly saw the light and realized that taking these funds is not in the interest of public transit. Now let's make sure that they follow through as the budget is finalized."

John Samuelsen, President of TWU Local 100, representing the transit workers of the MTA, said, "I applaud the moves by both houses of the Legislature to stop the "sweeping" of \$40 million worth of transit funds away from mass transit. Our public transit system has record ridership and needs all the support it can get. Withdrawing millions from the mass transit pot is a slap in the face to the 8 million riders who use the MTA every day as well as the workers who make it run."

Alejandro Gaviria, a 7 train rider who is a member of the Riders Alliance from Jackson Heights, said, "I'm glad the Assembly and Senate took this important first step to support transit riders. But the Governor needs to stand with us too. If his proposed budget is passed, we are the ones that will have to pay the cost. As a worker, I can't pay for another fare hike, and my job won't wait for bad public transportation."

In his proposed 2014-15 budget, Governor Cuomo requested to remove \$40 million from a fund that is supposed to be dedicated to mass transit, and to move it to the General Debt Service Fund. Governor Cuomo proposed to use the funds to pay debt service on the MTA's Service Contract Bonds—bonds the State had committed to pay for, not the MTA, for the express purpose of alleviating the MTA's debt burden and the negative impacts it has on service and on riders. Both the Senate and Assembly have now opposed this raid in their respective one-house budget resolutions.

In addition to stealing \$40 million from dedicated transit funds this year, Governor Cuomo's budget proposed to take an additional \$20 million every year for years into the future. Advocates pointed out that the Governor's proposal would cumulatively steal nearly \$350 million from the cash-strapped transit agency. State Comptroller DiNapoli, in his analysis of the Governor's proposed 2014-15 budget, pointed out that these are "resources that could have otherwise gone to the MTA."

Meanwhile, the cash-strapped MTA has still not restored the level of service riders had before bus routes and subway lines were eliminated in 2010 cost-saving measures, and the Authority has predicted that there will be additional fare hikes in 2015 and 2017.

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