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Groups Call for Bus Capital Improvements in PANYNJ's 2014-2023 Capital Program

Today, community, business, transit, real estate, and environmental groups joined together in front of the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan to call for more spending on bus infrastructure in the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey's recently approved 2014-2023 Capital Program. Nearly 2.6 million buses carrying over 90 million passengers travel to the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT) and the George Washington Bridge Bus Station (GWBBS) every year, yet the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey has not allocated any capital funds in its newly approved \$27.6 billion capital program to improve these facilities.

Buses help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from single occupancy vehicle trips and traffic congestion, and they provide an alternative to those who cannot afford to or choose not to own a car. But, the lack of a bus garage and an expanded bus terminal puts a strain on local communities contending with idling, parked, and moving buses through their neighborhoods.

The groups convened in advance of today's monthly PANYNJ board meeting to call on members to revisit the Authority's 10 year project spending plan and 2014 and 2015 budgets to include improvements to the nation's largest and busiest bus terminals.

"Every day, more than 8,500 buses carry nearly 400,000 people through the PABT and the GWBBS so it's baffling that there are no funds in the next capital program for a new bus garage or improvements to the bus terminal. The bus garage, which was postponed from the previous capital program, would ensure buses continue to serve hundreds of thousands daily riders while reducing buses in local communities," says Veronica Vanterpool, Executive Director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

"Over the last 10 Years, with the increase in commuter and long distance buses queuing and parking on our streets, our community has suffered enormous traffic congestion. The asthma rate for our children is the third highest in Manhattan," says Christine Berthet, Chair, Community Board 4 and co-founder of Clinton Hell's Kitchen Coalition for Pedestrian Safety (CHEKPEDS). "Bus gridlock prevents pedestrians from crossing the streets and retail stores see their revenues plummet. With each residential tower replacing a bus parking lot, the problem has escalated to crisis proportions. There should be no higher priority for the Port Authority than building bus terminals and garages to service bi-state bus commuters' needs, whose numbers have swelled up by 23 percent in 10 years. The Port Authority has a moral imperative to prevent this crisis and alleviate the hardships imposed on a growing community, including many seniors and lower income tenants."

While the 2014-2023 capital program was approved by the PANYNJ board in February 2014, there is an opportunity to modify the agency's budget and capital program each year as the agency reviews its revenue and costs prior to releasing its annual budget.

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