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TSTC Hosts a Discussion with Congressman Espaillat, Industry Leaders, and Advocates on the Future of Transportation in the Biden Era

Today, Congressman Adriano Espaillat (D-NY) joined Lateefah Simon, Member of the Board of Directors of Bay Area Rapid Transit, Beth Osborne, Director of Transportation for America, and Peter Peyser, founder of Peyser Associates LLC and transportation expert and advocate, for a post-Georgia Senate runoff election discussion on the future of transportation under the Biden Administration. Hosted by Tri-State Transportation Campaign, the virtual event covered a range of pressing issues, including federal funding for transit, job creation, equity, and climate resiliency. A recording of the event is available [here](#).

Nick Sifuentes, Executive Director of TSTC, released the following statement:

“With an ambitious agenda laid out by the Biden Administration, and after the Georgia special elections gave Democrats full control of Congress, the Biden Dept. of Transportation could lead us through the most consequential four years of transportation policy in U.S. history.

“President-elect Biden has already described plans for major infrastructure stimulus to modernize America’s transportation systems, and much of that will run through USDOT. At the same time, because transportation is now the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, billions of dollars of green infrastructure to combat climate change will be under DOT’s purview. This is a historic turning point to divest from fossil fuels across the industry and make a massive change to zero emissions transportation nationwide.

“And with a focus on racial justice and a just workforce transition, the new administration’s transportation policy won’t just be about infrastructure, it’ll also be about putting people back to work in high-paying jobs while addressing a longstanding legacy of pollution, illness, and death in low-income and Black and brown communities. Taken together, we are looking at a truly transformational era that would reshape the face of our country.”

Highlights from the discussion:

“I believe that we will quickly achieve the green light on congestion pricing, but also a big transportation and infrastructure bill. I think that we should get to that because it’s not only smart, America is really collapsing at all levels and we need to rebuild our roads, bridges, and tunnels. [W]e need to build green and build smart in a way that helps the climate and economy.”

-- **Congressman Espallat**

“We must address the needs of those that have been left behind--the communities most impacted by pollution and most reliant on public transit.” -- **Congressman Espallat**

“We expect to see a sizable relief package that will help keep transit operating through the end of the year.” -- **Beth Osborne**

“We need to make sure the relief bill doesn’t pour money into state DOTs without explicit guidance on what to build and how to build it.” -- **Beth Osborne**

“We need to talk about creating long-term jobs, not just construction jobs.” -- **Beth Osborne**

“Our priorities should include properly funding transit upfront and not holding things up at the federal level.” -- **Beth Osborne**

“So many of the mistakes we make [in infrastructure spending] are because transit is underfunded in the first place.” -- **Beth Osborne**

“Mobility is a human right.” -- **Lateefah Simon**

“Jobs in public transit are some of the last good jobs in the nation. It’s important that we maintain and expand these jobs.” -- **Lateefah Simon**

“What’s extremely exciting to me is that under Buttigieg’s leadership, there will be a ton of ‘nerds like us’ working to revolutionize transit.” -- **Lateefah Simon**

“Communities should be held accountable for how they prioritize their spending. Anything that’s not a highway should have facilities for everyone. Full stop.” -- **Lateefah Simon**

“Every civil society should have safe, accessible and integrated modes of transit that connect people with jobs and services.” -- **Lateefah Simon**

“We must push to change the imbalance between highway and transit funding that has existed since the Reagan administration.” -- **Peter Peyser**

“One way to address inequity is to focus on providing more public transit services broadly, not just in dense urban areas, but also in outer lower-income areas where transit is not readily available.” -- **Peter Peyser**

“There are a lot of green jobs to be had in converting every transit bus in the country to electric.”
-- **Peter Peyser**

“The federal government scrubs transit projects very hard, but doesn’t pay a moment’s attention to a state’s plan to expand its highway network.” -- **Peter Peyser**

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Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a 27-year old advocacy organization that fights for an equitable, safe, multi-modal transportation network that provides options and supports the economies of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. TSTC works to fix our commutes, meet our climate goals, stop traffic deaths, and make transportation fair.