

TRANSIT COALITION

October 20, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister:

Re: Public Transit Operations Remain in Financial Crisis – Federal Funding Needed Now

Millions of people from coast to coast are depending on a just recovery for public transit. Over the past several months, our organizations have stood together with other transit industry, municipal government, and labour allies in calling on the Federal Government for emergency operational funding for public transit. Your government's offer of emergency transit funding through the Safe Restart Agreement was greatly appreciated and a good start. However, transit agencies remain on the brink of collapsing or being forced to cut or eliminate service routes and jobs.

We now write to urge your Government to provide direct relief to public transit agencies across Canada which remain in financial crisis due to COVID-19. Funding of public transit operations should be a priority in the Fall Economic Statement – and we are calling on your Government to provide **\$400 million per month** in ongoing funding for transit operations to recover their financial losses incurred during the pandemic.

It is worth noting that this funding would be popular with voters. Polling done earlier this year by Probe Research found that emergency transit funding is supported by 79% of Canadians.

As the government continues to help Canadians survive the pandemic, public transit will play a crucial role in restarting the economy and ensuring people can return to work safely. Millions of workers - doctors, nurses, long-term care workers, food retail staff, workers from the manufacturing sector, students, seniors, low-income populations, people with disabilities, and new Canadians - use public transit – and they need access to reliable and affordable transit that supports social distancing, to get to work and access services. If public transit does not receive financial support for transit operations, we will all be affected by interruptions in essential services, increases in traffic congestion, and traffic-related air pollution. Paratransit service for seniors and people with disabilities will be critical to the health and quality of life of our most vulnerable citizens, as well as the functioning of the health care system. Of course, the most vulnerable members of our society will be most affected by service reductions but it will have an impact on all of us.

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As the second wave of the pandemic is now underway and is expected to be worse than the first wave, many transit systems will not survive without ongoing funding. We urge your Government to provide \$400 million per month in funding for transit operations to keep Canadians healthy and safe and to keep the economy moving during the pandemic and through the extended recovery period.

We look forward to a response to this letter and your commitment to resolve this issue.

Sincerely,

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Amalgamated Transit Union Canada
Burlington For Accessible and Sustainable Transit
Bus Riders of Saskatoon
Better Transit Alliance of Greater Victoria
Calgary Alliance for the Common Good
Climate Justice Edmonton
Climate Justice Victoria
Climate Reality Canada
Council of Canadians
Creating Healthy and Sustainable Environments (CHASE)
David Suzuki Foundation
Environment Hamilton
Free Transit Edmonton
Free Transit Ottawa
Functional Transit Winnipeg
Regina Citizens Public Transit Coalition
Toronto & York Region Labour Council
Transparence
TTC Riders
Wilderness Committee

cc: The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Finance