

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2020

The Honorable David E. Price
Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

As the Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee develops its FY2021 priorities, we encourage you to support a funding increase for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Bus and Bus Facility Competitive Grant program (5339b).

Your support of bus transit funding in FY2020 and other recent appropriations bills ensures the nation's bus transit systems will continue to provide a lifeline to seniors, veterans, students and commuters, many of whom have limited transportation options. Because of the Committee's sustained effort to increase bus funding since FY2018, bus transit investments are spurring new economic development and job creation opportunities in local communities. However, much more work remains to be done, as current authorized funding remains 15.7 percent below 2012 levels.

The recent investments in the Bus and Bus Facility program have been a game-changer. Before the plus-ups for bus funding, the FTA's Bus and Bus Facility Competitive Grant Program was oversubscribed 11:1 with \$2.5 billion in project requests for only \$226 million in authorized funding in 2017. This oversubscription led to small awards averaging \$1.9 million per project.

In the most recent funding round, the oversubscription ratio dropped to 4.5:1 with \$1.9 billion in requests for \$423 million in awards. FTA was able to fund transformational projects across the country to help construct new transit facilities, replace hundreds of old and inefficient buses and support innovative technologies to move riders more efficiently. These infrastructure

investments will be a catalyst for local economies to start addressing their significant fleet decline since the federal funding cuts dating back to MAP-21.

According to the 2018 National Transit Database (NTD), between 2012 and 2018, fleet size nationwide dropped by more than 16,300 buses or 22 percent. This reduction in fleet size directly corresponds to the 19 percent reduction in service hours and a 12 percent reduction in ridership. Until the Committee's efforts, bus systems simply did not have the resources to keep buses on the road and were forced to reduce service and eliminate routes.

Similarly, the reduction in federal funds caused bus transit systems to operate old and inefficient buses well past useful life. According to NTD data, the percentage of buses operating past useful life increased 48 percent while buses operating past 15 years increased 104 percent. Between the shrinking and aging bus fleets, Congress has more to do to ensure the safety and efficiency of the nation's bus transit system.

We strongly support a continued increase in federal investment for the FTA's Bus and Bus Facility Competitive Grant Program (5339b) in FY2021. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Darin LaHood
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Bus and Bus Facility Competitive Grant Program, FY 2021
List of Signatories
March 17, 2020

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