



April 9, 2020

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David Price  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Collins and Price and Ranking Members Reed and Diaz-Balart:

On behalf of The Bus Coalition's (TBC) membership of over 300 small, medium, and large transit agencies and industry supporters spanning 44 states and the Community Transportation Association of America's (CTAA) 1,200 small city, rural, tribal and specialized transit operations, we appreciate your continued commitment to the Federal Transit Administration's Bus and Bus Facility (Section 5339) program.

We strongly support an increase of \$485 million in federal investment for the FTA's Bus and Bus Facility Competitive Grant Program (5339b) in FY2021. The request is consistent with the amount the House included in the FY20 THUD Appropriations bill and is needed to address the significant aging and shrinking national bus fleet.

We know you are well aware of the catastrophic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy. The additional Section 5339 (b) funds we are requesting will play a small but vital role in keeping thousands of people fully employed in the bus and bus component part industries around the nation, as well as to assist transit agencies around the nation in their mission to continue essential service and, eventually, to help millions of Americans return to work in the near future.

Because of your 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. In the most recent round of the competitive bus grant program, 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. However, much more work remains to be done as current authorized funding remains 15.7 percent below 2012 levels.

According to 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.

Each year, our buses and facilities help transport millions of riders to work, doctor visits, school and recreational activities. To ensure these services operate efficiently and effectively, TBC and CTAA strongly support additional investment in the Section 5339b Program, which helps our transit agencies strive to meet a state of good repair.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to TBC's DC contact, Joel Rubin, at [joel@buscoalition.com](mailto:joel@buscoalition.com) or 202.347.9171 or CTAA's Scott Bogren at [bogren@ctaa.org](mailto:bogren@ctaa.org) or 202.247.1921. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,



Bill Carpenter, President  
The Bus Coalition



Scott Bogren, Executive Director  
Community Transportation Association of America

Cc: Senate Banking Committee  
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee